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Indian Famine Commission, 1898.

APPENDICES, VOL. IV.

EVIDENCE OF WITNESSES

FROM

THE CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR

(INCLUDES EVIDENCE OF CAPTAIN A. F. PINHEY, POLITICAL AGENT, BAGHELKHAND)

TAKEN BEFORE THE

INDIAN FAMINE COMMISSION, 1898.

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INDIAN FAMINE COMMISSION, 1898.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE

THE COMMISSION

APPOINTED TO FORMULATE FOR FUTURE GUIDANCE THE LESSONS WHICH THE FAMINE EXPERIENCE OF 1897 HAS TO TEACH.

At the Judicial Commissioner's Office, Nagpur.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

Monday, the 7th March 1898.

PRESENT:

SIR J. B. LYALL, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I. (PRESIDENT).

SURGEON-COLONEL J. RICHARDSON,
MR. T. W. HOLDERNESS, C.S.I.,
MR. T. HIGHAM, C.I.E.,
RAI BAHADUR B. K. BOSE, C.I.E.,
MR. R. H. CRADDOCK (*Temporary Member for the Central Provinces*).

MR. H. J. MCINTOSH, *Secretary*.

MR. H. F. MAYES, Deputy Commissioner, Balaghat, called in and examined.

Mr. H. F. Mayes.

7th Mar. 1898.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

A.—Departures from the principles of the Central Provinces Code.

The chief departures have been in connection with the management of works. These are dealt with in Mr. Higham's note, and I can add nothing.

Gratuitous Relief.—Chapter V, paragraph 37 (1), says the dole must be sufficient to buy the minimum ration. I applied for this rate to be fixed in Balaghat, where the rates paid were :—

	R	a.	p.
Man	2	8	0
Woman	2	4	0
Child 10—14	2	0	0
Child 5—10	1	8	0
Child 5 and below	1	0	0

Prices, however, rose to seven seers and six seers in Balaghat and Baihar Tahsils, respectively, and the rates according to the Famine Code for a man should have been R3-12-0 and R4-6-0 respectively, the rates of the other classes being raised proportionately. The rates paid to dependants, according to Public Works Department General Order No. C-498, were R3-4-6 and R3-12-0.

My proposals were, however, cut down to the following rates :—

	R	a.	p.
Man	3	0	0
Woman	2	8	0
Child 10—14	1	12	0
Child 5—10	1	4	0
Child 5 and below	1	0	0

The reason given (*vide* demi-official dated the 21st August 1897, to Commissioner, Nagpur Division) was that "the test is not the application of prices to individual payments, but the effect of relief in this form on the recipient. We do not find that full dependant rates are actually required elsewhere, and the rates indicated above will be ample for Balaghat."

Poor-houses.—No use was made of the poor-houses by sending to them persons who refuse to work, as it was found unnecessary and would have been impracticable.

B.—Degree of success which has attended the measures adopted.

The Famine Commission standard of 15 per cent. was exceeded in this district, as in the month of May there were 17·63 per cent. of the population in receipt of relief; but in some tracts this proportion also was exceeded. The population of the Lanji pargana is 81,000, but I had four camps there with a total population of 33,000. There were possibly some persons relieved who were not really in need of it, but they were on the road works and were not many; nor do I see how they could have been separated during the hot weather when task-work was in force. There were two classes of persons who gave us the greatest anxiety, (*a*) the tenants, and (*b*) the aboriginal tribes. The first class would not come on works unless they could get back at night to their homes; the aboriginals would not leave their homes at all. Both classes suffered severely during the rains, when they were brought on village relief. One thousand two hundred and ninety-seven loans amounting to R1,61,300 were given out as Famine Loans under the Land Improvement Act, and these provided work for many, the greatest number on any one day being 17,000 on 13th February 1897. But these works were soon completed; and although numbers on the roads rose rapidly during the hot weather, many could not be induced to come on to the works. Consequently

Mr. H. F. Mayes.

7th Mar. 1898.

they deteriorated rapidly in physique, and had to be put on the gratuitous relief lists.

The mortality in the district was very high. The rates from October 1896 to December 1897 are given in the margin. Movement about the district is very difficult during the rains, and has to be made on foot along rice bandis, and relief works were therefore more difficult to reach. Want of clothing and also dwellings, more dilapidated than usual, told severely during the monsoon on people whose constitutions were already undermined by poor nutriment or want of food altogether. Gratuitous relief was started in April, and by the middle of May there were over 8,000 in receipt of this relief. In July it was found necessary to extend operations, and numbers rose to over 13,000 in August, the total number on relief being then 50,000.

October 1896	6·17
November ,,	4·33
December ,,	5·21
January 1897	4·83
February ,,	4·82
March ,,	7·00
April ,,	6·67
May ,,	8·79
June ,,	9·91
July ,,	8·54
August ,,	11·10
September ,,	9 91
October ,,	6·68
November ,,	4·52
December ,,	4·14

Economy seems to me to be a matter of comparison, and I have no figures wherewith to compare the financial results of this famine with any previous one.

The total number of units relieved was 12,557,070 at a gross cost of R10,30,074, giving the unit rate to be 1 anna 3·75 pies; while the rate per unit under the various forms of relief works out as follows:—

	a.	p.
Public Works Department works including dependants	1	4·56
Civil works	1	7·50
Poor-houses	1	5·68
Relief centres and kitchens	1	9·92
Village relief	0	11·06

In loans R1,61,300 were advanced under the Land Improvement Act, and R2,63,000 under the Agricultural Loans Act, while the land revenue for 1896-97 and some small arrears of 1895-96, amounting in all to R1,76,000, were remitted.

The classes which have suffered most severely are the tenants. The kharif crop statistics for the current year show that only 67 per cent. of the normal area has been sown in spite of all the loans and charitable relief. Seed-grain was more than double its usual price, and for the uplands of Baihar Tahsil Government had to import seed and distribute it in loans, as the tenants could procure no grain for themselves.

The land-owning classes or malguzars have suffered, but to a less extent. Few, except the very wealthy ones, have been able to sow all their home-farm; most seem to have sown about three-quarters, while others whose position and credit had been shaken by the losses of the three previous years have collapsed this year almost entirely, putting only one-tenth of their home-farm under crop and having to borrow on very high terms to keep themselves alive.

As soon as works were started, the labouring classes were the best off and they have been able to secure a livelihood up to the present date. The trading classes have not been injured seriously as a rule. Some specialised industries, such as weaving, suffered during the famine, but they are now as busy as ever.

The same may be said of the artizans in this district where there are no large towns.

The great difficulty in this district is to provide some form of relief, not so demoralising as gratuitous relief, for the scattered inhabitants of the Satpura Range; they are largely aboriginal and are able to obtain a certain amount of food from the forests, but they are improvident and at the first sign of a rise in prices are ready to sell what grain they may possess. During this particular famine it happened that some tanks were needed for the ryotwari villages, but these were insufficient to reach all who needed help, and they had to be supplemented by gratuitous relief.

C.—Measures and methods of working which seem likely to prove most effective in future.

I would specially emphasize the necessity of starting kitchens for children and wanderers wherever possible as one of the earliest stages of famine relief. Wherever there is an official *who is not peripatetic*, there have a kitchen. It is no good putting a kitchen or a relief centre in charge of a Revenue Inspector; let him have inspecting charge, but he cannot be responsible for its working when he has to be continually on the move. No village should be more than two miles from a kitchen, and children in such villages should, as a rule, not be on the gratuitous relief lists. In the rains, however, this may not be possible, and, as happened in Baihar Tahsil this year, a sufficient supply of food may not be obtainable to keep the kitchen always going during the rains.

**Question* 118.—My experience has been that the younger officers-in-charge have been more successful than older men. They pick up the work more quickly, can move about more rapidly, and have not settled down into grooves from which it is sometimes difficult to stir them.

Gratuitous relief.—This should be started simultaneously with relief works. It may not be necessary during the earlier stages of test works. No reliable estimate can be framed until the village lists are prepared, but it may be taken for granted that as famine deepens the numbers on such relief will rise. The first stage to take is to strengthen the ordinary staff. In Balaghat we found that 90 to 100 villages were the utmost that one Revenue Inspector could manage, and this number must be reduced in the rains when communications become difficult. The supervising staff must also be increased; I had one Tahsildar or Naib-Tahsildar for two Revenue Inspectors checking the payments by the patwaris or mukaddams. No hard-and-fast rule was found possible as to the persons by whom the actual payments were to be made; but as far as possible, the mukaddam was employed. If, as frequently happened in Balaghat, there is no one in the village who can read and write, the task of filling up the registers must be left to the patwari, and we can only trust to constant supervision to keep him straight. To the classes to whom gratuitous relief may be given should be added the kotwars. We are dependent on them very largely both for reporting and detecting crime, and unless they are kept in the village the police administration will suffer.

Loans.—The famine loans were an admirable institution and proved an inestimable advantage while preparations were being made for commencing the larger works. In rice country they are always useful (provided that previous loans have been paid off) in repairing tanks and rice bunds.

(*President*).—You are the Deputy Commissioner of Balaghat?—Yes.

Since when?—April 1897.

Who was there before you?—Mr. Chitnavis, a member of the Statutory Civil Service.

When you came to Balaghat, relief was in full swing?—Yes.

How many works?—I can't say exactly, but we had road works and tank works.

When did they commence?—In the beginning of November 1896.

Besides these works what other relief was in force?—Gratuitous relief had just then been started.

At village centres?—I should rather say they were "relief centres".

You gave grain dole or cash?—Cash.

How was it distributed?—The Tahsildars had charge of it, they gave it to the Inspectors, and the Inspectors got the patwaris and mukaddams to distribute.

Was this the ordinary work of the Tahsildar?—No, we had special Tahsildars, one for each tahsil.

At the works were they paid in cash?—Yes.

How were the dependants and children paid?—In cash.

Who were the people on the village register to whom relief was given?—The ordinary beggars, and the people reduced to want by the famine. At first we were strict in our interpretation of section 34 of the Famine Code, but afterwards, specially during the rains, relief was given to all those in need.

Were the people always able to buy food in the villages?—Yes, I think they were.

At current rates?—Yes, but occasionally we had difficulty in the most distant parts of Baihar Tahsil.

What was the rate of grain when you arrived?—Eight seers above the Ghâts and seven seers below the Ghâts, rice being the staple food in these places.

What quality of rice do you take into account when fixing the famine wage?—Ordinary coarse rice.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Is rice the staple food throughout the district?—We take rice as the standard staple food throughout the district. People also grow a kind of inferior grain called the "kodki".

* The question referred to is one of those drawn up by the Commission.

(*President*).—Do their prices vary?—So far as I remember they don't vary for inferior rice, but I am not absolutely certain.

You say in your note that you proposed that the rates should be according to the Code R3-12-0 and R4-6-0 respectively for a man, and that this proposal was cut down. Do you know the reasons of the Chief Commissioner for cutting them down?—No, it was done by demi-official corrrespondence, but I think the Chief Commissioner thought that it was found by experience unnecessary to give full rations.

How many poor-houses had you in the district?—Three.

Were they at the head-quarters or in the district?—One at head-quarters and two in the district.

Who were in the poor-houses?—Everybody who was unfit to work and who came and asked for admission.

Had you a large number in them?—The highest number was on the 15th March, when we had about 1,634.

What sort of people were they?—A large number were wanderers and people from Feudatory States.

Were they in a bad state?—Their condition was very bad when I first went to the district in April.

Was the mortality in the poor-houses very heavy?—Yes.

What portion came from other districts?—I cannot say.

Did the people who applied for village relief and were refused because it was thought they were fit to work, return to their homes?—No, they were drafted from the villages to the poor-houses; they were all beggars and wanderers.

What castes?—Mostly low castes; we had very few from the higher castes.

Many children?—Yes, large numbers. On the 15th March we had 822 children, just half the total.

Were they with their parents or were they waifs?—Both.

Many orphans?—They were supposed to be orphans when they came to us, "temporary orphans," I should say; we have about 60 of them left, the others have been mostly reclaimed by parents or other relatives.

Was the distress most severe above the Ghât or below it?—Above the Ghât the privation was very great and the death-rate high.

Were the crops equal above the Ghât and below it?—Yes, except in one or two corners.

Did the people below the Ghât crowd to the works early?—Yes, the labouring classes did, not the tenants.

Had the aboriginal tribes their own fields?—Some of them had.

Who are the aborigines?—The Gonds and Baigas.

How do they live?—The Baigas generally live in Tolas or hamlets, while Gonds live in the main village.

What is a *thikadari* village?—It is a village given on lease for a certain number of years; the *thikadar* does not get proprietary rights, but he collects rent from the people and pays *thika-jama*.

Are the Gonds "*thikadaris*"?—No, nor the Baigas.*

Did the Baigas and Gonds keep good health?—Yes, they kept "fat" throughout.

Did they come to the relief works in numbers?—No.

Did they receive gratuitous relief in their hamlets?—They would not come for gratuitous relief. They did not require it.

In respect of gratuitous relief were they treated like other people?—Yes, when they came for it.

What was the price of common rice before September 1896?—Thirteen seers, the normal price in the district being 16 seers. Prices fell during the harvest, but rose soon after: the rise was all through India.

Did you relieve people who were not in real want of relief?—Yes, but they were very few. I saw occasionally women wearing jewellery.

What kind?—Silver.

Had they jewellery to dispose of?—No. I took it for granted that they wanted relief and took them on; that was particularly when task-work was going on.

Are you sure the jewellery was of silver?—Yes. I could tell it was not white-metal or old coin practically of no value.

What did you do next?—We went on increasing the number of relief camps and the number in receipt of gratuitous relief, and then started piece-work in some camps.

Was that done with the object of reducing the numbers?—No, but with the object of clearing those who did not actually need relief.

How did it work?—Perfectly satisfactory so long as care was taken to send to do piece-work only such as were able to do it.

Do you think people not strong enough to do piece-work were sent to do it?—Yes, sometimes; but when I saw a man was unfit for piece-work I sent him back to do task-work.

You had task-work and piece-work together?—Yes, sometimes one camp was task-work and another at a distance of 10 miles was piece-work.

Did not this double work tend to break up families?—We avoided that as far as possible. We kept families together.

Strong and weak?—Yes, where there were any weak members we put them all on task-work.

Any caste distinction?—No, only distinction of strength. (We found the Gonds to be a healthy and strong lot.)

Do you think that the piece-work system practically provided food to the dependants and children of the piece-workers, or were they thrown on kitchen and village relief?—The theory was that the wages earned should be sufficient to keep them all, but on the "payment by result" system the children and dependants were fed in the kitchen.

Was not any question raised in respect of gratuitous relief and kitchens, whether the relatives dependent on piece-workers should be admitted or not?—I do not remember.

Most of the people lived in their own adjacent villages, did they not?—Yes, but many lived on the works during the hot weather in rough bamboo huts.

Were they water-proof?—Some of the huts were well built by the gangs; others by contractors, fairly good ones.

Were the people in want of clothes?—Yes, they were in tatters.

Was that condition general?—Yes. I have never seen anything like that in ordinary times.

Did the general condition of the people on the works tend towards emaciation?—When I came in April the people had been on works for some time and were in a decent condition, but the newcomers were decidedly emaciated.

I suppose you mean in poorer condition than in ordinary years?—Yes.

When did the rains begin?—On the 16th June; it fell well till the 23rd June and then there was a break.

Did the people leave the works when rain fell?—Yes, they had started leaving the works just before the rain fell in anticipation of the rains. On the 15th May we had 47,000 persons; 30th May 43,000; 15th or 20th June 25,000; but on the 15th July we had 39,000.

Does your number include the men on the Public Works Department works?—Yes.

Does it include dependants?—No.

How did the people support themselves who went back to the villages?—They left part of their families on the works to make something.

Do you think they could get anything on credit from the village shop-keepers?—Well, I cannot say; they must have had a certain amount of credit; but I think it must have been pretty nearly exhausted by that time.

Did not the strong people go back to their villages to prepare the fields for sowing?—Yes, those who knew they

*Note.—They are wild tribes from the jungles, who can't be induced to settle in any fixed place.

Mr. H. F. Mayes.

7th Mar. 1898.

would be taken on by the malguzars, and others who knew they would get work.

Had you any tenants?—Above the Ghât 20 per cent. and below about 7 per cent.

How are the farm servants and agricultural labourers paid?—Those who are permanently employed get 2 pailies (or 2½ seers of grain) a day.

Are the wages of men and women the same?—Yes, and I believe they get some clothes, blankets, etc., at festival times.

Do children work as farm-labourers?—Yes, at harvest time large numbers of children are given work, generally whole families being engaged.

Do you know how such a family would be paid?—No.

You propose numerous kitchens, one every two miles?—Yes, when that is convenient.

What is the idea in your recommendation?—Simply to see that the children are fed; otherwise the children would have to be on the works and that would cause a great deal of inconvenience. We could not get the people to go long distances; we would have therefore to bring the works close to the villages, and so we would require extensive gratuitous relief for the children; they prefer kitchens to money being given to their parents.

Have you any reason to suppose that parents misappropriate doles?—Yes, in many cases they do. I know a case in which the mother and father were in excellent condition and the child was reduced to a skeleton.

What class?—I am not sure to what class they belonged; it must have been the labouring class.

Did you give large loans?—Yes, ₹1,54,000.

What did they do with it?—They built tank works, repaired bunds, etc.

Many new tanks?—Yes.

Was any portion of such advances misappropriated?—I think very nearly all the money was spent on works; we did not give them the whole loan at once, but before a man got his second and third instalments he had to produce a certificate showing the amount of work done.

What class of people took these advances?—Mostly malguzars and tenants.

What class of people did they employ on their works?—Generally labourers from their own villages.

(*Mr. Holderness*).—With regard to tank works; will you recover the whole amount advanced or only a part?—One-fourth is to be remitted in all cases, where money has been spent on tanks, land improvements, irrigation, etc.

Are these irrigation tanks useful?—Yes, immensely.

You had plenty of road work?—Only one in May 1896.

Did not that draw labour?—Yes, but not to any large extent.

If you had started road works by Government would you have drawn more labourers?—No, the Tahsildar had started road repairing, but no one came, and then when we started camps we had only 200 men, and so we had to close the works.

What is their objection?—They do not like to leave their homes.

You refer to the tenants?—Yes.

You started kitchens?—Yes.

In what month did you extend the kitchen system?—In August we received special orders from the Commissioner and then we started them.

How many kitchens?—We had 47 in September.

You think they did good?—Yes, immense good.

What was the condition of admittance?—Anybody who was in need of meals came in and was fed.

Did they come from a distance?—No, generally 2 miles, which was the limit.

Do you think the opening of the kitchens had any appreciable effect on the "death-rate"?—No, I do not think so.

You are of opinion that kitchens should be started early?—Yes, I think so, to make them successful.

In your note you say that the tenants and aboriginal tribes gave you much anxiety by not coming to the works. Can you suggest the opening of any small works to relieve them?—No, I cannot suggest anything special.

You speak of the need of tanks for villages; is there any means of getting them built except by takavi?—No; takavi is the only means, and the money so advanced would be well spent, even if the loan is to be paid in small instalments.

You think gratuitous relief should have been started simultaneously with relief works?—Yes at the end of March or the beginning of April.

What was the reason of its not being started earlier?—I cannot say. I was not in the district.

Do you know if the lists were prepared then?—I think they were ready in December. However, I am not certain. Mr. Fraser, the Commissioner, gave orders on the 10th of December to make payments, when the lists were handed over to the Deputy Commissioner to make payments to people whose names had been registered by the patwaris.

With regard to relief works, were they not started early in November?—Yes.

When you joined the district were not relief works in full swing?—Yes; four of them were working.

How many more did you open?—Twelve.

Was that on the camps?—Yes, I had ten big road camps opened, and many people came to them.

Can you assign any reason as to why sufficient works were not open before?—I cannot say, but I think the Public Works Department had great difficulty in getting officers.

When you asked for more road works was there any difficulty?—No, but there was a difficulty about staff.

When was piece-work first opened?—In May.

Had you contractors?—One work was entirely started by a contractor, but it was knocked on the head.

Did you find that the rates offered were good?—Well that is a professional question; it was discussed by the Executive Engineer and myself on the principle as to what work an average man can do.

Did you go on on the principle that the man who works should get enough for himself and his family to live?—At first the rates included the family; we took the average of a normal family, and then we did away with the kitchens.

(*President*).—Who were the kitchens for?—They were intended for the children,—any children who came.

(*Mr. Holderness*).—Generally on these works you kept the kitchen although piece-work was started?—Yes. The people did not like the kitchen. When put on piece-work, they would clear off, starve for a few days, and then return to be put back on task-work.

Had this the effect of deteriorating their physique?—Yes, they would have starved themselves if they had been put on piece-work. We had, however, about 25 per cent. inefficients on piece-work.

Have you got the figures?—No.

In August you had a second circular about piece-work; had you not?—Yes, we had orders to pay by piece-work.

When was this rule introduced in your district?—On the 7th August (*vide* Central Provinces Circular letter No. 579—5701, dated 7th August 1896, Public Works Department).

Was that applied generally in your district?—Yes, it was brought into operation in every camp.

According to this all able-bodied men were to be put on piece-work?—Yes, and the others on task-work.

They earned the D wage on piece-work?—Yes, and nothing more; and if they did less than the D task they got less.

No minimum granted to them?—No.

Do you think the limitation of the D wage to be a fair one?—Yes, I think it is enough to live upon, but for those who came into the camp in an emaciated condition it was not sufficient.

You think that ordinarily the D wage is sufficient?—Yes.

What are the causes of the high mortality shown in your statements?—The district is generally unhealthy and the people had deteriorated terribly for want of proper food, clothing, etc., and were not able to pick up.

Do you think this state of things had been going on long?—Yes for about 2 years, before it was noticed that the people were going down.

The people who came to the works were not in good condition in the beginning?—No, not till they had been for some time in the kitchens.

The death-rate seems to have been high in May and June, and then it began to fall. Was that due to privation?—No, I would put it down to fever caused by a long break in the monsoon. The Civil Surgeon said the high death-rate was due to fever and dysentery.

Did you abandon the relief centres?—Yes. There were only a few people at these centres; they were mostly wanderers, and were given in charge of the Civil Officer, and then they were turned into kitchens.

(*Dr. Richardson*).—When were the relief works started?—November 1896.

And the gratuitous relief works?—April 1897.

Your kitchens?—End of August 1897, on a large scale.

You say in your note that it would have been better if gratuitous relief and kitchens had been started simultaneously. Do you mean that if they had been started simultaneously with relief works they would have saved many lives?—Yes, we would have got more people to come to the kitchens.

The mortality in March was 7 per mille, and at the end of August 10 per mille, and so you think these should have been started simultaneously?—It would have been a question whether the people would have availed themselves of those advantages earlier, but I think many would have.

Did the children thrive in the kitchens?—Yes.

Had you a kitchen for each relief work?—Yes.

The people went freely to them; did they?—Yes, a fairly large number of dependants availed themselves of it.

I see the relief in kitchens was one anna an adult. Was that sufficient?—Yes, I think so.

Were relief centres established everywhere?—Yes, but in many cases we had great difficulty to get some one to check payments, etc.; in some places we could get no one who could read and write.

(*President*).—A great many children who did not get the dole did not go to the kitchen. How did they manage?—I cannot say.

Can you say what rates were paid as wages by those who took takavi advances?—I think they gave fair wages; we always checked their rates, and saw that fair wages were given; they however paid a little less than famine rates.

Was that a good deal more than the ordinary rate?—Yes.

Were they paid in cash?—Yes, generally in cash at the rate of so many pasori (a measure of volume) per rupee.

Don't you think people earned more on task-work?—Yes.

Were the people able to support themselves and their families on the wages paid by takavi employers?—Yes, it was essentially a family arrangement, where all the members of the family did some work.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—Did not tenants, owning land, object to leave their villages, being afraid that they would lose their lands?—They were more afraid of losing their houses; I cannot say about the land. I have known of one or two cases where the people had left their houses unguarded and found on their return that they had disappeared.

Do you think Government could protect such houses?—Yes, but I do not know how far it could take such responsibility on itself.

Where the labouring classes had no land, what was their objection?—Well, perhaps, they had not much objection. Very often they practically had no home; they were living in little shanties.

Had the Gonds and Baigas any objection?—Both object to leave their homes.

Is there any migration from your district to Berar?—Yes. I made enquiries on this subject, and I was told that for the last three years the people have been going regularly to Berar, but such migration is not extensive.

What classes go?—Gonds, Baigas, Marars, and Pankhas.

Do Powars go?—No.

Do Mahars and Mangs go?—I don't think so.

Was the migration large in 1896?—I cannot say. I was not in the district at that time.

Mr. H. F. Mayes.

7th Mar. 1898.

Can you tell us when they started clearing off?—I think in September, when the rice crops failed.

Did they leave the district in large numbers?—I cannot say.

If the September rain fails, can anything save the crops?—No.

Did those people who cleared off to the Berars find any work there?—No.

What became of them?—They wandered and came back.

Was there great mortality among them?—Yes, there must have been, but I cannot say positively as they were wandering about.

Were they inmates of your poor-houses?—Yes, when they returned from their wanderings I suppose many found their way to our poor-houses. They certainly did at Wardha.

Mr. Halifax in his letter of the 20th September 1896, referring to tanks, says there is no hope of malguzars undertaking their construction so long as they do not get loans on easy terms. Do you agree with Mr. Halifax?—Yes.

Then if loans are given to them a great many tanks can be constructed by the malguzars and also by Government?—Yes.

How many tank works were undertaken by Government?—About 8.

All at once?—No, five at first and three later on.

Did the aborigines come willing on such works?—The Gonds did come, but not the Baigas.

Was there not a complete depletion of crops on the plateau?—Yes, we had to import seed for *takavi* advances.

Did you purchase any grain from charitable funds?—In the low lands and high lands altogether we distributed about ₹52,000 in grain and ₹60,000 in cash from charitable funds.

Was the bad condition of these people due to the failure of harvest or are they always so?—They are not always so badly off; their condition otherwise is normal.

Is not this plateau "land-locked"?—Yes, but we have now been constructing *pucca* roads.

Had the people any resources?—No, hardly any.

Are there many malguzars in these places?—No, a few; they are a kind of "bankers".

Many big money-lenders?—No. It is very hard to get any money in this part of the district, even in ordinary times.

Was any relief given to the weavers?—Yes, we gave them orders for cloth and purchased it, and gave them advances to set them up in their trade.

Was there any attempt on the part of the people to appear in rags in order to excite pity?—Yes, especially among the women it was very common; we found that some women who were given blankets once, had turned up again.

What is the area unsown this year?—I think about 33 per cent. I have no statement about *rabi*, but only 72 per cent. of the normal *kharif* area has been sown.

Did you receive substantial assistance from charitable funds?—Yes.

(*Mr. Craddock*).—Were the forests thrown open?—Yes.

Did it benefit the people?—Yes, the people got a lot of edible roots, *mahua*, fuel and grass.

When did it come to an end?—During the rains.

It was after that that the gratuitous relief was started; was it not?—Yes.

Do you think the opening of the forests did any harm?—No.

Do you think that the Gonds and Baigas who subsisted on the forest produce, were physically reduced by it?—Not the Gonds, perhaps the Baigas were.

It was difficult to bring them on village registers because they were living in the forests, was it not?—Yes.

(*President*).—When was the forest opened?—On the 16th November 1896, for edibles; —for head-loads of fuel, grass, etc., at the end of March.

And for grazing?—Before that; I should say from the very beginning.

Mr. H.F. Mayes.

7th Mar. 1898.

Was there great loss of cattle?—No, they pulled through.

Do you think they lived on "*wild hara*", *i.e.*, wild grass or hay?—They were usually put out to graze on rice straw. I think they had enough to graze on.

Did you see many deaths from starvation?—I saw people in the poor-houses die of emaciation. I saw no deaths from starvation on the way-side, but I think Mr. Mayne did see some cases.

Revd. Mr. J. Lampard.

7th Mar. 1898.

The Revd. MR. J. LAMPARD, Missionary, Baihar (Balaghat), called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

I think it well to preface any evidence and suggestions I may give by stating that my knowledge of famine affairs is confined to a very limited area, I having resided during the famine year in the village of Nikura, 14 miles east of Baihar, an entirely jungle tract, with quite small and scattered villages.

I have, however, been in close touch with the people, and have personally supervised the various forms of relief instituted by myself, consisting of the construction of two tanks (costing together over ₹4,000) and other works, the distribution of gratuitous relief and maintenance of orphans from my own fund. I have also distributed, on behalf of Government, gratuitous village relief in twenty neighbouring villages and superintended a children's kitchen. I have further seen something of the working of the Baihar poor-house and two neighbouring Government relief-works.

Cause of distress.

The local distress was entirely the result of the failure of the kharif crop of 1896 and the shortness of the two preceding ones, and consequent scarcity of grain and abnormally high prices, rice, the staple food, going up to five seers during the rains of 1897. In some places the failure of crops was entire, and my own experience in connection with the Mission farm of harvesting the same quantity of dhan as I had sowed seed, was common; only in the few cases where good tanks existed was a fair harvest secured.

Normal condition of people.

Under normal circumstances the people, whose wants are few and simple, enjoy a fair measure of well-being, but the great majority of cultivators are one and two plough tenants, a large proportion of whom cannot get through any year without borrowing grain at the beginning of the rainy season. The greater part of the labouring class live a hand-to-mouth existence at all times.

Relief operations began late.

The only general criticism of Government relief operations that I would offer is the expression of the opinion that relief measures were started too late. The result of this was that when works were opened a number of people had become physically unfit for labour, many fell an easy prey to cholera and other bowel diseases which became common during the hot weather, and considerable numbers came upon gratuitous village relief who otherwise might not have done so. I am largely brought to this conclusion by the fact that in the two or three villages contiguous to my own relief-works, which continued uninterruptedly from 1st November 1896, not only did the majority of the people keep well and robust right through the famine, but when we had an outbreak of cholera on the works the deaths, which numbered nearly a hundred, were almost entirely among the people who had come to me from other relief-works or distant villages. I paid Code rates of wages.

A.—Departures from the principles of the Central Provinces Famine Code.

With regard to departures from the principles of the Famine Code I have no evidence to offer.

B.—The degree of success attending measures adopted.

Takavi loans.

Takavi loans were largely applied for and granted and were, to my mind, an entirely satisfactory form of relief to cultivators. Those loans given for irrigation arrangements have resulted in a changed appearance of the tracts where, in scores of villages, artificial irrigation was almost unknown—now good tanks and well bunded fields have come into existence. Seed loans, given in kind, enabled cultivators to sow, which the vast majority absolutely could not have done but for such assistance.

Remission of rents.

Opening of Government forests.

The remission of rent and other taxes for the year has been much appreciated, and the opening of Government forests for free collection of edible products undoubtedly saved many lives.

Relief-works.

Public relief-works generally took the form of tank construction, undoubtedly the very best form of relief-work in a tract such as this. Its institution saved the lives of numbers of people, and its costliness in some cases would have been much reduced had the people not fallen into so weak a condition before the opportunity of being so employed was offered them.

Residence on relief-works.

Residence on the relief-works was not objected to by the lowest castes and more or less migratory people, but better caste people, and those who had anything of a home, were averse to living on relief-works as their house and other property might suffer in their absence, and they generally could not afford to leave any one in charge. The aboriginal tribes are averse to living, even temporarily, in close proximity to other castes. On the whole I think residence on relief-works is a good test of the reality of distress.

Small proportion of men on relief-works.

With regard to the small proportion of men on relief-works as compared with that of women and children. Men perhaps find employment nearer their own homes, but I do not think it would be better paid employment; they would probably work for even less money in some cases, in order to remain in their own homes and look after their bits of property. In any case I do not see that the State could avoid the responsibility of finding a means of maintenance for the families of such men.

Gratuitous village relief.

Gratuitous village relief appears to be a very costly form of help as administered here last year, but saved very many lives. I know of a good deal of extortion of a part of the allowance to paupers by kotwars and in one or two cases by mukaddams, as it has been reported to me there was from cultivators receiving takavi loans by patwaris. (No cases of the latter, however, have actually come under my own observation.) Under such circumstances some persons not actually in need of such help received village relief, but not considerable numbers. I do not consider that serious demoralization has followed this form of relief.

The chief difficulty I met with, was in dealing with the large number of applicants for gratuitous village relief who had no permanent physical defect, but had become too weak for relief-works and yet seemed hardly proper persons for gratuitous assistance. Especially was this the case during the rains. Could these people have been prevented from falling into this state of weakness by prompt relief measures, or even failing this, have found some light employment near their homes, the village relief lists would have been materially lightened.

Note regarding Baigas.

Two or three whole communities of Baigas (aboriginals), numbering some scores of souls, were found by me in an advanced stage of emaciation, they apparently not having been willing to go to relief-works which involved leaving their homes and the neighbouring jungle which they well knew. I put them on village relief at half rates for two months by which means all these people were saved, whereas I am fully of opinion that at least half of them would have died without that assistance. [I do not think Baigas (or any people) can subsist entirely on forest produce; they need some grain-food. Their superior knowledge of jungle foods enables them to do with much less grain than others, hence the Baigas referred to above pulling through with half allowances.]

Poor-house.

There is no doubt to my mind that the poor-house is dreaded by all classes of people and that very few would ever go to one except driven by hunger. Whatever precautions may be taken for the preservation of caste, all alike consider that to enter the doors of a poor-house is to lose it. This

fear kept numbers of destitute persons from availing themselves of this form of relief, and many must have died in the earlier months of the famine in consequence. This opinion is based on what I have seen and heard from the lips of scores of people.

The poor-house, however, is one of the most economical forms of relief, and indispensable, I think, as a check to deception in other departments of relief. I am inclined to think that all wandering persons should be compelled to go to the poor-house.

As a matter of fact, the broken caste of low caste people is very easily repaired when food again becomes cheap.

Children's kitchens.

Children's kitchens in central villages (not connected with relief-works) do not seem to have been very successful here, partly because they were not instituted until the rains at which time it was frequently impossible for even big children to cross *nalas* and other obstructions on the way to the kitchen village. At the two kitchens which came under my observation nearly all the children lived in the kitchen village; the few who were not residents of the village were allowed to live at the kitchen.

Charitable fund grants.

The Charitable Fund was a most valuable auxiliary to State relief. The grants of bullocks to some cultivators enabled them to keep their status as such, otherwise they must have fallen into the servant class. The grants of food-grain to *kisans* prevented their falling quite inextricably into debt. Another much appreciated form of help from this source was the distribution of clothing and blankets, a most necessary matter in these frost visited uplands.

Diet of the people.

There is a query as to the food of the people. Here the almost universal diet consists of penj (thin kanji made from rice or kodon) for the day meal, and boiled rice or kodon with dal or vegetables at night.

c.—Advice as to most effective measures in future famine.

With so limited an experience of the general working of Government famine-relief measures, I find it difficult to make any really helpful suggestions as to improvement at any future time.

The one feeling strongly impressed upon my mind is the necessity of the prompt application of relief measures, not only in the interests of the people relieved, but in the interests of those relieving them.

If projects for relief-works are prepared beforehand and test works opened immediately distress is discovered, at the Code rates of payment, I do not think persons not actually needing relief would come on to such works in any number, for while the Code rates of payment for labour are sufficient (when the amount actually gets into the hands of the work people) to maintain those not reduced in physique in fair working trim, they are not enough to tempt anyone who could find ordinary employment elsewhere.

If the physique of the people is preserved, more work will be got out of them, hence relief-works will be less costly; large numbers who through emaciation get on to village and poor-house relief would never require such forms of assistance; disease would be proportionately less likely, and less fatal, and the whole working of famine-relief operations made more easy and more successful from every point of view, not only from that of saving life and relieving distress, but equally so from that of economy. My own experience with emaciated children and others is that it requires *months* of care and good feeding to restore one so reduced to a fair measure of health and vigour, and that often it is impossible to do so and the person dies.

Small relief-works.

In a jungly tract like this a number of small relief-works seems advisable, so that people can find work near their homes. If these works are established by takavi loans to cultivators for tank making and other earth-work, they result in future profit to the owner and to the State. It is perhaps unavoidable that on such works other than actually destitute people get employed, but anything is cheaper and better than to allow people originally able to work to fall into the gratuitous relief ranks.

Children's kitchens.

I think children's kitchens might be multiplied, and, if commenced early in the famine, would do much to prevent desertion by parents and other relatives. To have to walk several miles daily is impossible in a tract like this, and I think every village, or nearly every village, might have its kitchen under the charge of the malguzar, mukaddam, or other man of position. These men are generally illiterate here, but the numbers under their care would not be large and they could give an accurate account verbally to any official appointed to look over their work, who could visit them weekly or fortnightly for this purpose. Could not this branch of the work be supervised by the police who seem to have had more leisure than other officials during the recent famine?

Revd. Mr. J. Lampard.

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Gratuitous village relief.

This is a most difficult matter to handle successfully, especially when the relief is given in money; this cash distribution should be avoided at all costs; peculation, extortion and other evils are largely increased when money is given. Could not the classes of persons enumerated on page 15 of Famine Code be fed with cooked food at their own village children's kitchen (see preceding paragraph)? If it were found that such persons would not receive food in this form, I would suggest a daily dole of raw grain.

In such decentralization of relief measures as I have suggested, the difficulty of staff for working such measures of course arises. I think village headmen and the police could be more utilized if the handling of money were reduced to a minimum. A man cannot carry one rupee's worth of grain about with him without causing remark, but he may easily carry ₹100 in cash about in his belt without detection. In famine time every one in these small villages knows almost to a seer what amount of grain is, or ought to be, in everybody else's house, so that robbery by the mukaddam of grain in his charge would probably be easily discovered.

As I have already said, in this tract the mukaddam would generally be illiterate, but many illiterate people keep much more accurate accounts in their heads than others do in books. In order to make him feel his responsibility and to put him on his honour a bit, mukaddams so employed might receive a small monthly wage.

If the handling of money by subordinates were thus largely done away with, it would of course be necessary to arrange for grain stocks to be kept at convenient centres, when, as last year, all local stocks were exhausted months before the end of the famine.

Not entirely close all relief works.

I think that great care should be taken as to the entire closing up of relief-works at the end of a famine. In affected areas some works should remain open at which people, actually unable to find employment elsewhere, might have a means of gaining a livelihood till better times.

Net result of famine.

With regard to the net result of the famine on the economic condition of the people here: how far the damage done is likely to be permanent—depends largely on the kharif harvest of 1898; if that be good, then I think that next year will see all traces of the famine largely effaced.

The larger cultivators, by the help of takavi loans, have made tanks and otherwise improved their land, which will enable them easily to repay such loans within the appointed period if no new scarcity arises. When they have done so they will be better off than before.

The one and two plough tenants are somewhat heavily indebted and will have a struggle to pull through the next two years; a bad season or the loss of a bullock may ruin them, but one more plentiful harvest or two average ones will establish them.

The labouring classes whose number is greatly reduced will, during the next few months, through scarcity of labour, suffer, but will recover with their employers later on.

I think it cannot fail to result from the recent famine that there will be a more widespread appreciation of, and attachment to, the British Raj.

(*The President.*)—Were you at Baihar throughout the whole famine?—Yes, in the village of Nikam, 14 miles from Baihar. I do Mission work unconnected with any society.

What was the immediate cause of the famine?—Failure of crops.

You say in your note that the two preceding crops were short. Is that so?—Yes, but at that time I was not interested in the agricultural question; since last year I have started farming and have studied it.

To what extent did the *kharif* crop fail?—It is the general impression that it was below normal.

Revd. Mr. J. Lampard.

7th Mar. 1898.

When did the distress commence?—Towards the end of 1896.

When did the prices go up high?—In September 1896, but in the earlier part of the rains rice was sold at five seers a rupee, and later on it was impossible to get any grain.

Who are the people who supply you with grain?—Local grain merchants. The local *bania* was away supplying grain on the works, and so put us to considerable inconvenience.

Who was this bania?—One Haru Sao of Balaghat.

Does he ordinarily deal with your part of the country?—Yes, but there is a great difficulty of transport; the roads are very bad, *kutcha* built; we depend mostly on Banjaras.

Are there many Banjaras in your village?—None.

Are the Banjaras in these days reduced in number?—Yes, the railway has largely taken away their profession.

Is the forest closed to them?—I don't know.

When did Government relief measures commence?—In the beginning of January.

The two tanks mentioned by you in your note, were they part of the relief-work?—No, private relief-work started by me from money collected for the purpose.

What works did Government start?—Tanks chiefly, and road-work from Baihar to Balaghat.

When did people commence coming to your works?—1st November. I had some 300 people on one tank and 500 on the other.

Were these both new tanks?—Yes.

You finished both of them?—Yes.

Do they hold water?—The one at Nikam does hold water, and not the other.

Do you think that the people who came to your tank works were in need of relief?—Yes, I think so.

Were they agricultural labourers?—Yes, and small cultivators.

Had they any property by selling which they could support themselves?—No, when they sold their cattle they had come to their last resource.

Were there any weavers among your workers?—Scarcely any, but there was among the labourers a weaving caste known as *Pankas*, who came from Raipur side, but these people have forgotten their trade and have now become agricultural labourers.

Any carpenters or other trade?—No, the village *lohar* wanted relief like others. Land is the only resource for 95 per cent.

You say in your note that the only criticism you can offer as regards Government operations is that they started relief late; you mean "relief measures" generally?—Yes.

You say you paid Famine Code rate. What rates are those?—I paid B rates.

How did you task them?—I had no task-work, I simply got out of them as much work as I could.

You found that they worked very well?—Yes, my work compares favourably with that of Government. I supervised the works myself. If I found a man sick, lame or unable to work, I paid him his day's wage and sent him home for that day; the others were not hindered.

Was the takavi loan spent for the purposes for which it was taken?—I think so; the people are very grateful to Government for those loans.

Do you think that those people who got takavi advanced and employed labour, paid proper rates?—I think so; they adhered to the conditions, which were, I think, 45 by $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet for a rupee, that is about half the work done under ordinary circumstances.

What is your idea about residence on works? Do you think it is reasonable?—I think the objections of the people to reside on the works reasonable, but the lower classes or migratory people don't object.

Why do the others object?—They have perhaps a little garden, a hut, a couple of cows, and if they are made to reside on the works they fear that they will lose their little belongings.

Can't they arrange to leave them in charge of some one?—Yes, but then that man will have to be maintained.

Do you think in a famine like this distance is the real test of distress?—I do not think so; they hold on until the end, and they die, although there may be relief works at a distance of 20 miles from them. For people like those in these districts relief-works close to them is absolutely necessary.

Do you think the D ration of the Code sufficient to keep a man in health?—It is small for a working man. I have no experience of it; I think B wage is reasonable and sufficient.

There is difference of opinion as to whether parents could be trusted with either the cash-dole or grain-dole of their children?—In very many cases they cannot be trusted.

Is it so among all classes?—Yes, other than aboriginal. I have therefore suggested that kitchens should be multiplied (please see page 7 of my written evidence).

Did you see any difference between the Gonds, Baigas, and the ordinary Hindu as regards the treatment of their children?—The Baiga and the Gond stuck to their children to the last. I cannot say that of the other low castes, such as Pankas, Marars, Chamars and Mahars.

Any sweepers among them?—No.

Had you any hospital attached to your relief works?—No.

How did you deal with sickness?—I am quite an amateur in that line; ordinary quinine and other simple remedies were tried in the case of fever and other sickness, but when cholera broke out Government sent an hospital assistant.

You had charge of a kitchen. Can you tell us what was the condition of the children when they came in?—Not very bad; nearly all the children belonged to the village.

Were they fallen in condition?—No, their parents had been regularly on works.

What did you feed them with?—Rice, dal and vegetable.

Did you notice any scurvy?—No.

Had you any difficulty in getting vegetable?—No.

I gather from page 6 of your printed note that you are of opinion that "gratuitous village relief" is a most costly form of help. What would you substitute?—My advice and suggestions will be found under "C". I am of opinion that cash distribution should be avoided, as it leads to peculation, extortion, and many other evils, and people tell a lot of lies in order to get the cash relief.

Do you recommend the opening of forests. Do you think forest produce sufficient?—Yes, the forest should at such times be thrown open, although the aborigines are the only class of people who will be able to take advantage of this concession. I do not think forest produce alone sufficient to maintain the Baigas. It has to be supplemented; the Baigas, although they are fully acquainted with all sorts of edible forest roots, etc., still suffered severely.

You are of opinion that kitchens should be started earlier?—Yes.

Had they any repugnance to go to the kitchens?—Oh, no.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—You started relief works of your own?—Yes.

When?—1st November 1896.

What was the scale of payment adopted by you?—I paid Code rates of wages: ordinarily during the harvest time they got about one kuru (or 3 to 4 seers of dhan, grain for a day's work.)

How much did you give the Baigas?—Half Code rates.

What is the average pay of a labourer?—A farm servant gets 6 khandy of dhan for the whole year, a khandy being about 120 seers, or 240 lbs., and R4 in cash, and at times he gets clothes, but not regularly. I pay this wage myself.

What does a day-labourer get?—Two seers of dhan. People will work for lower wages in their own villages rather than go to other villages for a higher wage. Farm servants enjoy other privileges; their wives, relatives, and children are also employed on the farms.

(*President*).—Is the day-wage of a man and a woman the same?—A man gets a little more; 2 annas is the full rate of pay for a man. The malguzars do not pay them in cash at all.

(*Mr. Bose*).—Did you notice any silver ornaments among those on your relief works?—No. They have some pewter ornaments which have no market value.

(*Mr Holderness*).—In your written evidence you say: "Public relief works generally took the form of tank construction." Was there no other kind of work started?—I was referring to tank-work undertaken by Government. There was no other kind of relief work undertaken for the public generally.

Do you know if people object to relief works?—No, not to the works, only they do object to "residence on the works".

Do all classes object to residence?—No, about 50 per cent. who are chiefly the Gonds and Baigas.

Do the agricultural classes object?—I do not think so, the Marar, the Panka, and others have no objection.

Do you think the works should be more numerous?—Yes, if it can be done, there should be a larger number of works opened. Takavi advances should be more freely given.

Do you think we should have more kitchens for the children?—Yes.

Will not that separate the children from their parents?—My written answer is with reference to gratuitous relief in the villages and not with reference to the works.

Revd. Mr. J. Lampard.

7th Mar. 1898.

(*Mr. Craddock*).—Is the forest produce sufficient to keep the Gonds and Baigas from starvation?—Yes, in the hot months it is just sufficient to keep them alive, but not afterwards. They died in large numbers as their reduced constitution could not prolong existence on the forest products only.

Did they not avail themselves of the relief works?—About 20 or 30 whom I personally knew were induced to come but not the others. Before I finish my evidence I would respectfully lay before this Commission the miserable condition of the Baigas. Considerable numbers of these people preferred to die rather than come near the relief works. Even in their last stages of emaciation, and at death's door they would not come forward; they have a very strong disinclination to beg; so when forest produce failed them all they did was to lie down and die. It never occurs to the village officers, or even to the Inspectors that there are Baigas next door to them requiring help. All ignore them. All ordinary methods of inducing these people to take advantage of relief having failed, I respectfully urge that now Government should take this class of people in hand and do something for them.

The Right Revd. BISHOP C. F. PELVAT, Roman Catholic Bishop of Nagpur, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

Bishop C. F. Pelvat.

7th Mar. 1898.

My experience with regard to the recent famine does not extend beyond a few thousand people we relieved here at Nagpur, at various railway stations and in outlying villages. We did not meddle with the people that were in Government Poor Asylums and relief camps, as we saw by personal inspection that all that could be done was done with a devotedness beyond all praise.

1. The famine-stricken people with whom we have been in contact can be classified under four heads:—

(*a*) There were land proprietors who, owing to former debts, had been unable, after their scanty provisions were exhausted, to get further loans of grain and money from native bankers.

(*b*) Others had been in the service of malguzars or well-to-do cultivators, and had been discharged on the failing of crops and the rise in the prices of staple food.

(*c*) There were the old and infirm who up to the famine time had been living on the charity of their relatives or of rich people.

(*d*) Finally a considerable number were women and children who had been left destitute by the desertion or death of their husbands or fathers.

By all accounts there was no lack of grain in their respective districts, but the price was enormously high. The poor received no more alms and the others had managed to live only a short period by the sale of their implements, jewels and very clothes. All had been compelled by sheer destitution and starvation to emigrate to other districts and to betake themselves to railway stations and chief centres in the hope of finding the necessaries of life. To this emigration, I believe, are due thousands of untimely deaths. Had Government seen its way to prevent this excessive rise in food prices, many of those emigrants and vagrants could have held on in their respective villages, have been spared many trials, and have saved their life. The starting of cheap grain-shops at an early date in the places where weekly markets are held would have done the needful.

Relief-works surely have saved many hundred thousand lives. Yet those immense gatherings of men, women and children of all descriptions and castes are not without objection and without danger to public health and morality. In my humble opinion well would it be if chiefly men and grown up boys were taken on with wages above the average to enable them to feed their families, and if the camps were at such distances that the workers could spend a day every week or at least every fortnight in their own homes. I might also suggest that the reclaiming of waste lands would be a most useful relief work. Could not those lands be disposed of, when the famine is officially over, in behalf of ruined land proprietors, evicted tenants, discharged servants and orphan children?

2. The temporary Asylums erected at the principal centres of the affected districts have proved an unspeakable boon to the old, the infirm, the sick, the destitute and unprotected women and children. However I believe it would have been an additional blessing if Government had made an appeal to the religious societies established in these Provinces for their management, under the supervision, of course, of the chief officers of the districts. This supervision would be a sufficient guarantee against all undue or objectionable religious interference. Religious societies in India live and work under the protection and often with the aid of Government. They value these benefits and would be most happy to give every help possible under such trying circumstances as those of a widespread famine or plague. I speak, of course, only in the name of my own Society, but I feel convinced that all are animated with the same feelings. These Asylums would likely have been more popular, the expenses to Government less, and the inmates attended with greater care and love.

3. Finally, there is the question of orphans and abandoned children. The religious societies of these Provinces have taken charge of some thousands of them and have founded several orphanages. I am of opinion that Government by means of the Educational or Agricultural Department should keep a general control over these new institutions and should follow the same policy as in the case of grant-in-aid schools. I would even say that these new agricultural or technical orphanages have more claim upon the attention and aid of Government than ordinary schools and colleges. No income can be derived from them, and yet buildings are to be erected, implements to be procured, maintenance to be provided for. They train children who otherwise would be a draining channel of large sums of Government money. The Catholic Mission of Nagpur has taken charge of about 1,000 of famine children, relying indeed upon voluntary contributions from friends, but also upon Government help in money, lands and supervision. These children are being trained according to their original social condition, and are kept in the simple habits and customs of their respective castes, in order that they may be later on useful citizens of the State. In conclusion, I take the liberty of pointing out that the very best preventive remedy against the future havoc of the famine would be improvement in the ways of cultivation according to modern scientific approved methods.

(*President*).—How far does your jurisdiction extend?—The whole of the Central Provinces, the Santhals, the Berars, and the Aurangabad district; I also visit many stations on the railway lines which are not strictly within my territorial jurisdiction.

Were any relief works started under your direction?—We had some 1,300 acres of waste land granted to us by the Chief Commissioner. We started building huts for the people from Balaghat and other distressed places who came to us, and employed them on field work and in grinding corn. The people seemed very happy with us, and those that left us after the famine are coming back to us.

Do you think Government could have stopped the rise of the price of grain?—Yes, to a certain extent.

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Most of those who did not go to the relief works had purchased stocks of grain months before.

Do you think Government could have stopped the rise in the price of grain by importing grain?—Yes, or by allowing the people to migrate freely to other provinces. This migration would have kept the prices of grain low. Even mortality would have been less.

Did many cases of death come under your observation?—I did not personally see any case of death from starvation, but I have seen many emaciated people. Our nuns saw some deaths due to starvation, and I think the last case that came to their notice was that of a widow and three children dying under a tree from starvation.

In paragraph 2 of your written evidence, you speak of "temporary asylums". What were they?—Poor-houses.

Were the poor-houses opened by Government unpopular?—Yes, I heard so. The people thought that they were confined in them and were anxious to get out. The people in charge had no sympathy, and I think there was some caste feeling. I visited a Native State and reported the state of affairs to the Chief Commissioner. The Chief Commissioner at once gave instructions to have the people properly fed and clothed. These poor-houses were in charge of Mahomedans and so the Hindus would not go into them. The scene in the Native State was very ugly. The poor-houses in charge of the Deputy Commissioners were better managed.

Do you think the religious societies would have undertaken this work?—Yes. In Nagpur we have some three different religious societies. I am sure they would also have come forward, but speaking for myself we could have devoted 20 or 25 of our missionaries to take charge of such works. Precautions should, however, be taken not to injure their caste feelings. People of their own castes should be selected to cook for them.

(*Mr. Holderness*).—Would the societies have established poor-houses at their own expense?—I can't say; they would have contributed; they have largely contributed now.

Do you think your poor-houses would have been better managed?—I think so.

Who sent the orphans to you?—We collected them, some at Balaghat, and the others from other places. They are still coming in. In two or three cases the parents came and claimed the temporary orphans. We returned them to their parents and also paid them their railway fare, but they have all come back.

You say the Nagpur Catholic Mission has taken charge of some 1,000 children. Have you still got them?—Yes; about 76 bolted, but the others are still with us.

You are bringing them up as agriculturists?— Yes, mostly as agriculturists, but we are training them as carpenters, blacksmiths, and other similar trades.

Where is this orphanage?—At Thana, a village 8 miles from Nagpur. We want to make this village a small settlement of these boys, get them married and settle them as they grow up.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—How many of these orphans have you now?—Eight hundred with a small variation of 10 or 15.

Are you expecting some more?—Yes, some from Jubbulpore.

Did you get any grant?—Yes, two rupees for each boy.

Didn't your nuns and priests collect these children all over the Province?—Yes, they collected plenty of children. When I was at Nandgaon, some 50 children came to me and begged me to take them at once with me. We had to refuse many who were able-bodied and fit to earn for themselves.

When did you commence relief operations?—September 1896, at Jubbulpore.

Do you think that the distress was great?—Yes, especially at Jubbulpore, where the poor-houses were crowded.

Did you see many relief works?—Yes. At Nandgaon I saw as many as 10,000 people on the works.

What was their condition?—The children half-naked, sleeping in the fields—a condition very dangerous to morality. Many of these people came from Piparia and Pachmari. I spoke to Mr. Fitzpatrick about the condition of these people. I also think they suffered much in breaking stones.

Do you think they were well looked after?— Being Government works I did not inquire into that.

Have you any poor-houses now at Nagpur?—Yes, we have one in the city; the nuns manage it.

Do you think the caste prejudices of the people prevent them from coming to it?—No: in fact we have more applicants for admission than we can afford to take.

Mr. E. PENNY, Executive Engineer, Nagpur, called in and examined.

Mr. E. Penny.

7th Mar. 1898.

I put in written answers to the Commission's questions.

*40.—I was appointed Superintendent of Works in connection with Famine-relief operations in November 1896, and continued in the post until the end of January 1898.

Extent of charge and opportunities of gaining practical experience.

My circle included at first ten Civil Districts and the Chhattisgarh States; of these districts, five were under the Nagpur Commissioner, four under the Commissioner of Chhattisgarh, and one each under the Commissioners of Jubbulpore and Nerbudda.

The latter arrangement was found inconvenient and only continued till May 1897, after which month my circle was confined to the Nagpur and Chhattisgarh Civil Divisions.

In the accompanying Statement A, I have tabulated the districts, and given some information regarding the number of relief charges opened in each, together with a few figures illustrating the maximum number of persons on the works, and the number of day-units relieved. Omitting the districts of Seoni and Chhindwara, which were only in my charge for a short time, there were 66 "charges" in 8 districts, no relief works being opened in Chanda: the highest weekly average on the works in any one month was 78,426 in the Raipur District in May 1897, and the total number of day-units relieved during the whole period was 41·11 million.

On the index maps† attached to this statement all the roads on which famine-relief labourers were employed are marked, and also the position of each "charge" which was opened under the Public Works Department superintendence.

Statement B gives the names and the lengths of the different roads, and the total number of miles on each road on which famine labour was employed. From this it will be seen that operations were conducted over a total length of 683 miles.

39.—With regard to the measures of State relief used in my circle, there were three separate systems which were at different times resorted to, and to these I will now briefly refer:—

Measures of State relief adopted.

(I) Relief-works were generally taken over by the Public Works Department early in January under the rules and orders contained in Central Provinces G. O. No. C-498 of 26th December 1896, which approximated very closely to the system contemplated in the Central Provinces Famine Code.

In this system, according to the Code, the relief-workers are first separated into classes, a task or fixed amount of work is set, and every worker who performs the task appointed for his class, receives the full wages of his class. Short work entails short payment, but the minimum wage must never be allowed to fall below that fixed under the Code (*vide* Central Provinces Code, paragraph 51).

Task-work.

(II) The task-work system was in full force up to the beginning of the rains in June, when effect began to be given gradually to the piece-work system in conjunction with it, as contained in the instructions conveyed in G. O. No. 305-3571 of 15th May 1897, and Circular No. 385-3822, dated the 28th May 1897.

Piece-work.

In this system, of which the principle was that a fixed rate was to be given for work done and no more paid than the work done justified, contractors were to be employed who would take work at piece-work rates. A fixed proportion of the rates were to be paid to the workers, and the rates

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.
† Not reproduced.

were to be adjusted so as to enable an able-bodied labourer to support his own dependents, at the same time the rates were to vary with the price of the grain.

The reasons given for the introduction of this system were (i) that task-work charges had in many places become so overcrowded, that a fair task could no longer be obtained, (ii) that the general condition of the workers had greatly improved, and a large proportion were quite capable of doing a full task, (iii) that less supervising agency was required, and there would be fewer openings for the mis-appropriation of funds, (iv) that some more effective test was necessary than that imposed by task-work to induce people to return to their homes and ordinary field operations at the beginning of the monsoon season.

This system was largely introduced, and it only differed from ordinary contract in that the piece-worker was to pay his labourers a definite proportion of the total rate allowed, retaining for himself a certain fixed percentage.

In some districts it was arranged that piece-work charges should alternate with task-work, and in others that it should form part of the same "charge"; but whichever method was adopted, a task-work charge was always close at hand for the inefficient labour.

Payment-by-results.

(III) Later on, in August, a system of "payments-by-results" was advocated, under which no contractors were to be employed, wages were in no case to exceed the D class rate, and for short task only such work as was actually done would be paid for. No allowance was to be made for dependents, who were to be treated separately, and payments were to be made at the end of every three days. Every work was to have a task-work annexé, and the principle to be enforced was that able-bodied labour was not to be paid except by results, whilst inefficient labour must be paid enough to enable it to live.

Public Works Circular No. 579—5701, dated 7th August 1897.

The system was intended to meet a situation at that particular period, when a considerable number of able-bodied labourers had returned to their villages, and left a larger proportion of inefficient people on the works than was contemplated when the former piece-work rules were introduced.

The new rules were not to be brought into force on any work without the consent of the Commissioner, nor were piece-work charges already organized to be changed.

The Chhattisgarh Division was scarcely affected in any way by these rules, as only on one small work alone, at Raipur did the Commissioner consider them to be suitable for trial.

In the Bhandara District a good trial was given to the system, as both the Deputy Commissioner and Commissioner were in favour of introducing it there, and the only other district in which it came into operation was to a very small extent in Balaghat.

Kitchens.

The remaining measure of relief in use during the famine was the opening of kitchens.

From almost the commencement every large work had a kitchen attached, but these were reserved exclusively for children and dependents connected with the workers. In July it was directed that they should be thrown open to all applicants obviously in need of food and to emaciated children in the neighbourhood whether connected with the workers or not, and this was what was then done up to the time the works were closed.

Departures from the Code.

41.—Of these measures, the "task-work" was authorized by the Code, but not quite in the form it was adopted. The "piece-work" was directly opposed to paragraph 49 of the Code, where it is stated that no famine-relief work shall be done on contract. The "payment-by-results" was an unauthorized modification of the task-work system of which the Code makes no mention.

The kitchens were contemplated by the Code, but it is not quite clear if they were intended to be attached to the relief-charges, or to be merely a form of village relief.

43.—The departures on the task-work system from the provisions made in the Central Provinces Code were mainly two-fold. In the first place the classification laid down in paragraph 52 was changed, in the place of four classes the great mass of workers were divided into two only, B and D. Class A was a special one reserved for mates, conservancy peons and others having some little authority, and class C was altogether omitted; secondly, although the "gang was taken as the 'unit'", as authorized in paragraph 59 of the Code, this necessitated a departure from the principle laid down in paragraph 57 in the event of the task as a whole not being done, because it was impossible to distinguish between those who had, and those who had not, done their individual task.

The reasons for the departure as regards classification, are fully explained in G. O. No. C-498, Chapter III, paragraph 13 and need not be repeated here: the reasons for the introduction of "piece-work" and "payment-by-results" have already been given in describing those measures.

Another departure from the Code was the appointment of other than Revenue or Public Works officials as officers-in-charge (*vide* Code, paragraph 50). The intention clearly was that all such were to be Government servants with a reputation at stake and a pension to lose. As a matter of fact the appointment of permanent officials was not always possible, and many low-paid subordinates were temporarily promoted to the pay and rank of Naib-Tashildar, and placed as Officer-in-charge in a position of great responsibility and trust involving the handling of many hundreds of rupees daily.

Again in the Central Provinces Code, paragraph 60, it was ruled that the Officers-in-charge should adjust the rates of wages on their charges. This power was taken out of their hands, and a reference had to be made to the Commissioner before any change could be effected—(*vide* paragraph 31 of G. O. No. C-498).

The advantages and disadvantages of each system—

Task-work.

44.—As to the advantages and disadvantages of each system, (*a*) first, with regard to the relief of distress and saving of human life, (*b*) and secondly, with regard to economy. (1) A task-work charge with a kitchen attached, on which employment is offered to all and on which each person is bound to receive a minimum wage for a nominal task done, is without doubt an efficient and attractive form of relief, as evidenced by the overcrowded charges in nearly every district in which relief-works were opened on this system.

For the relief of weakly and inefficient labour it is eminently suitable and efficacious, and if confined to this class of relief-workers, it is probably as economical as any system that can be devised which has for its main object the saving of human life without granting absolutely gratuitous relief.

It is only when able-bodied labour capable of doing a fair day's work is retained on such charges that all its disadvantages become apparent. As all dependents are separately relieved, the sense of obligation of the workers towards them is weakened; as all can get a minimum wage, and the earnings of a family give a comfortable subsistence allowance, the tendency is to do as little as possible.

The larger the charge, the more cumbersome become the daily accounts and the greater the opportunities for fraud.

The cost of the outturn is larger in proportion to the normal cost than on any other system owing to the impossibility of exacting an adequate task.

Piece-work.

The advantages of a piece-work system are that it prevents the able-bodied from benefiting by the leniency of the task-work test and calls upon them to prove their claim to State relief by submitting to the stricter test of payment-by-results; that it gives better results as regards outturn of work and does not tend to demoralize the people by the receipt of wages in return for a nominal outturn.

The disadvantages of piece-work only appear when injudiciously applied without the labourers having previously had some experience of work to which they may be unaccustomed. In this case the condition of the people would probably deteriorate if the work attracted them at all.

Suggested improvements of the method adopted.

45 and 46.—As regards any improvements of the measures used or any particular combination of measures, I think perhaps it would be safer that all relief-works commence on the task-work system, and as the labourers acquire experience and strength that frequent drafts should be made to a piece-work annexé on which strict payment-by-results be enforced, whether a contractor be employed or not. To prevent professional stone-breakers or earth-workers from earning unduly high wages, the earnings on the piece-work should be strictly limited, and I would fix this limit at 25 per cent. above the ordinary task.

The degree of success attending the measures.

49.—If we consider the degree of success which has attended the measures adopted solely from the point of view of the number of units relieved, there would be nothing but cause for congratulation, but

Mr. E. Penny.

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from the point of economy, the application for 6 months of the hard-and-fast Code system of task-work was, in my opinion, disastrous, and this was considerably aggravated by the necessity for employing all applicants for work and by the practice which at first obtained of giving a money-dole to dependants.

The people quickly realized that the D wage which they were all entitled to was in the case of families a comfortable allowance, and when this was supplemented by a money-dole to dependents, the works proved so attractive that charges could not be opened fast enough, and many which were supposed to be limited to 6,000 contained for weeks together as many again to the utter dis-organization of the staff and all discipline. This overcrowding led to many abuses, much peculation and waste of money, and the evil would have tended to increase rather than diminish, but for the late but timely introduction of the piece-work system.

The only regret is that it was introduced so late in the season as to render a fair trial almost an impossibility. The change was effected during the monsoon season when supervision was extremely difficult and inspection, which was more of a necessity at this period than any other, could only be carried out by hurried visits and under the most trying circumstances. The introduction of this system combined with the demand for field labour tended to the gradual reduction of numbers on the works, and in very few cases indeed was there any increase beyond the maximum figures reached in May and June.

The extent to which works of public utility may be available as relief-works.

Number of "charges" opened, and works on which relief labourers were employed.

50 and 51.—I have already given a statement showing the number of charges under the Public Works Department in my circle when attendance on the relief-works was at a maximum, and also a list of the roads and the mileage on which they were employed—(*vide* Statements A and B).

The whole work was practically that of roads. In the Baihar Tahsil of Balaghat some few tanks were constructed, and two or three were taken up in Raipur.

For an "unmetalled" road on which the work would consist of banking alone, and assuming it to be an ordinary plain road with an average bank of two feet, the number of day-units that could be profitably employed per mile would be 9,000 —(*vide* calculations attached).

Number of day-units per mile.

52.—For a "metalled" road which includes earth-work, moorum soling and collection of metal for two 4½-inch coats and which should suffice for five years nearly, I calculate that the number of day-units would amount to 30,000. This is exclusive of work on metal consolidation, which is not a suitable one for relief-workers without the aid of rollers.

If relief-workers were employed on earthwork alone, I consider that four chains should be allowed for each gang of 90, unless the bank is over three feet in height and that the least space that should be given to any one gang is three chains at four chains to the gang. Employment could be found for 1,200 people per mile, and if nothing else was in progress a charge of 5,000 would extend over about five miles, which is in my opinion the limit over which a charge should reach.

With moorum collection and carriage in progress and metal-breaking, the whole 5,000 of any one charge could be concentrated in a mile.

Permanent utility of the works undertaken.

53 and 54.—Of the roads which have been taken up as famine-works very few indeed have been completed, and a very good idea of what remains to be done can be gathered from the Index maps* attached to this note. On those few roads where the construction has been carried through, the surface will certainly rapidly fall into dis-repair unless funds are forthcoming for maintenance, as there is nothing that requires more constant care and attention than a newly metalled road surface.

New roads that could be undertaken.

The whole of the roads taken up would certainly be of permanent service to the community if *funds can be found for their upkeep*, but I fear that it is quite impossible from Local or Provincial resources to maintain more than a few of the most important, and even if the portions constructed were maintained, there is still ample room for further relief-works on their extension, and any number of new roads which would be of permanent utility could be proposed in all districts, as the want of communications is certainly one of the most pressing needs in the Provinces.

Metal collection.

55 and 56.—On no road has more metal been collected than would suffice for two 4½-inch coats, and if the roads were under maintenance, this would not be in excess of the requirements for five years, and would scarcely suffice for that period on lines carrying heavy traffic.

As to the value of metal collection as a means of employment of relief labour, I am of the opinion that there is none better. On existing roads any quantity of material is always certain of being utilized sooner or later, and as the collection forms the greater part of the expense of the upkeep, and the material in no way deteriorates by being kept, it is one of the most advantageous means that can be devised for benefiting the State as well as relieving distress.

It has other advantages—a metal-breaking camp is concentrated, and is the easiest of all forms of labour to supervise and to deal with, whilst inefficient labour can by a few weeks' practice easily acquire the knack required for a fair outturn.

Village tanks.

57, 59 and 60.—Village tanks are not, in my opinion a form of relief-work which should be undertaken by the Public Works Department, except in conjunction with a road work. It would be preferable to leave such small works to be arranged for through the malguzar. The works must of necessity be small ones, usually not more than 500 people could be profitably employed without undue crowding of the space. They would be scattered, generally some miles apart, and would need an officer-in-charge and a professional establishment at each place. They are useless for irrigation purposes unless proper masonry outlets can be constructed, and this is not a suitable work for unskilled labour. Finally, being situated close to the village, they attract labour which is not in pressing need of State relief.

Some nine tanks were undertaken in Balaghat, they were long distances apart, all are useless until the masonry outlets can be constructed as they are intended for irrigation purposes. The four constructed in Raipur were for the use of the villagers and their cattle.

Such petty village tanks may in ordinary years be of some advantage to the villages at which they are constructed, but they could in no way be regarded as a protection against famine, because being of comparatively small depth and area, the same causes which bring about a famine would tend to dry them up, moreover they are mostly used for irrigation purposes, the water is run off each season, and they are dependent on each monsoon for being replenished: if the monsoon fails they are useless.

As to large and small works and the distance test.

Distance from which relief-workers came.

71.—I believe that the great majority of workers were drawn from a radius of five or six miles, and only those whose villages were quite close returned home at night. But every camp contained some wanderers from afar and a small proportion of those who came from a distance of about ten miles. Beyond this I do not think the charges attracted labour without special inducements, but I understand that in one camp in Wardha people under special measures were induced by the Tahsildar to come a distance up to 25 miles from the uplands west of Kotoli to the works on Arvi-Ashti Road.

Drafting over long distances.

73.—In the event of there being any large public works available on which there was a strong demand for labour, I should not hesitate to recommend conveying labourers long distances in preference to employing them on smaller works near their homes, but this course would doubtless add to the difficulty in disposing of them at the close of the works, and they would have to be drafted back again in the same way.

Residence on the works.

74 and 75.—As regards residence on the works, the numbers who took advantage of the shelter erected varied a good deal, and it depended to a great extent on the proximity of the villages to the camp, but I think on the whole that residence on the works was the rule rather than the exception. Residence was never made a condition of relief, and people were always free to return to their villages at night if they preferred to do so.

76 and 77.—I do not think it would practically be possible to make residence on the works obligatory if the

* Not reproduced.

homes of the workers were in easy reach. At the same time there is no doubt that as relief-works move forward, people of the nearest village flock to the works and leave them as soon as the distance is beyond an easy walk, thereby showing that they are quite willing to pick up a few pice on easy terms without being really in any great need.

Residence on the work is in no way distasteful to the workers. The shelter was always freely resorted to, but on many roads people preferred to camp out in the dry season opposite where they were working, when the country was open, to walking back a few miles to the head-quarters.

79.—There was no direct distance test imposed on the workers anywhere, but anyone who arrived after the muharrir had taken the register, was not admitted for that day to the gang, and this was generally found quite sufficient to ensure fair punctuality on those who did not remain in camp.

Task-work.

I have already dealt with some features of this and other matters in a Note on Mr. Higham's Report which was written before I was aware of the requirements of the Famine Commission, and as I shall have occasion to refer to this, I attach it as an Appendix to this Note.

Clasification.

94 to 98.—I consider the most convenient classification would be three classes for adult workers—

Class I (special)
„ II and
„ III

and in these classes I would put men and women alike without any distinction on earthwork. The diggers alone would be Class II, but on metal-breaking all those capable of doing the B task would be in this class irrespective of sex.

Children above 12 I would place in Class III, and have one class only on the works of from 7 to 12.

Wages.

The wages should be as at present laid down in the Code, *viz.*, the money equivalent of a certain number of chittaks of grain (Code, paragraph 84), and I see no object in the alternative system showing the component parts of a day's ration, because payment is never made to workers in this form and the connection is not at all clear.

Fines.

99 and 100.—It is absolutely necessary in order to maintain some hold over the workers who are generally quite contented with the lowest wage, that powers of fining be in the hands of the Officers-in-charge.

The frequency of the fines for the same gang might be limited to three times a week, but it must be prompt to be effectual and not subject to a reference to some one who may be at the other end of the district.

Under the present regulations no fines were practicable (Chief Engineer's Circular No. 70-715, dated the 1st February 1897) unless the instructions were ignored. When fines are inflicted, I think they should be on the whole gang, and not on a part only, but I exempt the children in all cases. I also think that fines should be a fixed sum, say 2 pice for Class II and 1 pice for Class III: this is more easily understood by the workers than varying sums depending on the grain rate.

100 to 103.—The great majority of workers on earthwork were on D wage throughout the famine and their condition on the works certainly improved.

Day of rest.

In the interest of the staff as well as the labourers, there must be one rest day in seven, but Sunday should not be specified. The rest day is generally fixed by the nearest weekly bazar, and this is what was practically adopted on all works.

I would advocate an extra wage being earned during the six to make up for this rest day. I would let them have it on easy terms, but in no case give it without some return. The conditions must be simple and easily understood, and any such elaborate ones as those proposed by Mr. Higham would not be workable.

Carrier-unit.

104 to 107.—I consider the "carrier-unit" of 10,000 for a famine labourer may be accepted as a standard and as an ideal which under favourable circumstances may possibly be worked to, but practically I do not think on ordinary earthwork it would be possible to enforce the task, as the number of carriers for which employment has to be found is usually much larger than that given by the formula. So far as I can see it would only be used in carrying moorum or metal from quarries to the roadside when every carrier available is required. In this case if a table of tasks and distances were previously prepared for the use of the staff and the number of carriers for each distance clearly set before them, it might be possible to work to it, but it would be quite useless to expect the establishment to arrive at results if the formula alone were given them.

Number of persons in one gang.

108.—As regards the best unit for task work, I think the gang of 90 members, which was adopted, is somewhat too cumbrous for earthwork, and I would prefer it to be limited to 60 with proportions as nearly as possible of 20 men, 30 women and 10 children.

Piece-work.

84 to 93.—All are I think agreed that some system of piece-work is advisable for relief labourers, and the only point under discussion is the particular system which shall be adopted. In this matter one of the main points on which opinions differ considerably is whether ordinary contractors shall be employed or not.

Employment of contractors.

One argument against the employment of contractors is that "it is incompatible with that direct supervision and control on the part of the supervising officer, and that free communication between him and the labourers which are essential to secure the effectiveness of relief": another is that the employment of contractors does not materially diminish the establishment necessary for the supervision of a charge, and that the work they would undertake could be done just as well by the Officer-in-charge and his staff, whereby the profits accruing to the contractor would be saved.

As regards the first objection I can only say that it is not in accordance with actual facts, and that in piece-work charges the labourers were not less under supervision and control than in the neighbouring task-work charges. The second objection appears at first sight to have more in it but is in reality as much a fallacy as the first. The successful management of piece-workers is a speciality, and cannot be undertaken by any Officer-in-charge; and even if he had a sufficiently numerous trained staff, he could not possibly give sufficient attention to the details, and attend at the same time to his multifarious duties in connection with the camp; besides he has no interest in getting work out of the labourers, and as complete detail measurements are generally an impossibility, to avoid disputes with the labourers he assumes they have done sufficient to earn a living wage and pays them accordingly. To my mind the arguments in favour of employing contractors are greatly superior to those against the system.

The crying want in all our camps was a sufficiency of a trained professional staff. Now in every Public Works Division there are numerous reliable contractors with a trained staff of assistants and mates well accustomed to the management of work people—expert at setting out work, and whose very living depends upon the degree of confidence they inspire by prompt and regular payments to their employés. These are the very men we are in want of, and who are ruled out because they claim a profit on their outlay. All the reliable contractors are well known to the Divisional staff, and if a careful selection is made, I am of the opinion that the percentage paid for profit is well earned in return for the professional assistance afforded and the infinitely better outturn and quality of work obtained.

These men are accustomed to work to a specification, they know exactly the requirement and what will and what will not be accepted, and as Executive Engineers have a complete hold over them they can be made to redo bad work. Wherever piece-work has been a failure, it has been where Officers-in-charge have put in some nominee of their own, and I know of no case in which it has been otherwise than a success, where a careful selection of well-known contractors have been made. On the above grounds I strongly advocate the employment of contractors on relief-works.

Terms on which contractors should be allowed to work.

As to the exact terms on which contractors should be allowed to work, I would allow them in all cases a fixed percentage on the rate and lay down the exact proportion they had to pay their labourers for work done.

On road work I would avoid all *pit* measurements, as there is nothing so difficult to get at as the exact quantity

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taken out of an half-excavated pit, and the calculations and deductions of previous measurements are laborious and practically almost an impossibility with so limited a staff as is generally available. In all cases pay on section measurements with an allowance for settlement and bulk. I would insist upon contractors paying their labourers twice a week and in the presence of the Officer-in-charge. Contractors almost invariably work on the family system and arrange with the headman to excavate a certain quantity for a certain sum. This should be the basis, and before any piece-work is commenced, a regular table of rates must be drawn up in which the variations in accordance with the price of grain is clearly shown; the rate per 100 c. ft. of all work undertaken should be entered in two columns—the amount due to the workers per 100 c. ft. and the amount at the percentage agreed upon due to the contractor.

There should be no minimum, and the rates payable to the labourers should be fixed with reference to a fair task, *plus* an allowance for inexperience, condition, and the price of grain.

To prevent professional diggers from taking an undue advantage of the relief-works, I would fix a maximum beyond which no extra payment would be made.

Relations of Civil and Public Works Officers in connection with the management of relief works.

Sole authority over the staff to be vested in Public Works Department.

114 to 123.—The procedure adopted in these Provinces is accurately described in paragraph 14 of Mr. Higham's Report on the Central Provinces famine works, and it has worked on the whole very satisfactorily. But it must be clearly laid down that every official on the works is subordinate to the Sub-divisional Officer and Executive Engineer. There was on this account occasional friction with the Medical Department, some Civil Surgeons claiming that the Hospital Assistants were absolutely under their control for transfer and duties, whereas the postings should be entirely in the hands of the Public Works Department; and Civil Surgeons, as Inspecting Officers, should be empowered only to issue orders on medical and sanitary matters.

Inspecting officer.

Inspecting officers included Tahsildars, but I am of the opinion that no official under the rank of an Extra-Assistant Commissioner should be allowed to inspect works. I cannot recall any useful criticisms made by Tahsildars, and occasionally their inspections were resented by the Officers-in-charge and considerable friction engendered thereby.

Officer-in-charge.

I have already said that the Officer-in-charge should be drawn from a higher class. He must be the head of the Camp, and Public Works Department subordinates cannot be altogether independent of him. If he draws less pay and allowances than the latter, he cannot command the respect and obedience necessary for good discipline in the Camp.

Every matter connected with the Camp should be under the control of the Public Works Department, and the Officer-in-charge must be the responsible official on that spot.

Magisterial power.

Disorders in camps were extremely rare, and such as there were, were caused by the minor officials, and not by the labourers. I see no necessity to vest any one with magisterial powers. It would probably be abused.

Other details of management.

124 and 125—The unit of payment should be the piece, and on task-work payments should be made daily.

Payments on task-work.

I have already indicated the method of payment I would recommend, but experience has shown that the muharrirs employed in the late famine are a most unreliable class, and that an enormous amount of peculation was systematically carried out by them. Payments were made through them only because no other establishment was available. It would be preferable in my opinion to have independent well-paid cashiers, whose sole duty would be to make payments and let no cash at all go through the gang muharrir's hands.

Limiting number in each charge.

A charge should be strictly limited to 5,000 which is as many as one Officer-in-charge can manage, but it is quite useless making a regulation of this sort if at the same time it is held that every applicant for work is to be admitted irrespective of his or her condition.

This understanding forcibly impressed on all Officers-in-charge caused more confusion, waste and general demoralization than any measure I know of.

Single charges from this cause alone when situated in places where populous villages abounded ran up to 8, 9, 10 and 12,000 to the utter subversion of all organization, and new charges opened on the task-work system to meet the rush in turn became overcrowded. Had a strict system of medical examination and of payments-by-results been in force in conjunction with the task-work, no such overcrowding would have occurred.

Exaction of a task.

Except in metal-breaking camps, where the work was concentrated and under control, it may be admitted that the exaction of any adequate task was a pure farce, and that generally the figures entered in the gang register of the task done bore no relation whatever to actual facts. The mere measurements alone became with our limited staff a physical impossibility, and as there will even in the best regulated camps always be a certain amount of pressure, due consideration must always be given to the quickest way of setting out and measuring up work. I found it far preferable in earthwork to avoid all pit measurements and set out and measure the task in so many running feet of bank section. It was easily understood by the whole gang as the stake set up on the ground was the measure of the day's work and up to this the earthwork had to come. It had the further great advantage of employing more carriers, for each gang worked in a length of about four chains, and was divided into four or five digging parties with its complement of carriers who had to bring the earth some distance instead of throwing it up opposite the pit where digging was in progress.

Establishment.

The establishment laid down in Central Provinces G. O. No. C-498, was found quite insufficient in practice—one gang muharrir to each 500 people was required, and not less than two work agents were necessary for each 3,000 people and four for a 5,000 charge.

The Officers-in-charge were of the rank of Naib-Tahsildar, drawing R50 a month and 20 per cent. in addition for approved work, but I am of the opinion that for the responsible post of Officer-in-charge involving the handling of many thousands of rupees, a much better class of man should be procured, and I consider the pay offered as absurdly inadequate. This should not be less than R150, and liberal horse allowance should be given in addition. More use should if possible be made of Commissioned and Non-commissioned Native Officers of the Indian army wherever easily available.

As for Inspecting Officers I would recommend the free use of Staff Corps Officers under the Executive Engineer; they did excellent work wherever employed, and I only wish I had had more of them.

The only safeguard against fraud on task-work charges is constant supervision by European Officers, and money laid out in establishment of this sort is well repaid.

Travelling Inspectors of Accounts I found very useful indeed, and they should always form part of the regular establishment. I am indebted to them to bringing to light many matters which would otherwise have escaped observation, as most Inspecting Officers from the Civil Department gave little or no assistance on this head.

Accounts.

As regards the accounts themselves I have made my remarks and suggestions in a previous note, to which I would invite reference, and I would only remark here that the *field* accounts must be of the very simplest possible character.

The necessity of more detailed instructions on points of management of relief works.

I have only to add that as small "test" works will always be started by Civil Officers, instructions should be issued in the Public Works Department in full detail for their guidance. This is necessary in order that the procedure may be the same in both cases and should the works later on be transferred to the hands of the Public Works Department there may be no break in the system or confusion of any kind.

The general instructions (C-498) as they stand are too diffuse on some points and omit many important details. Of these I would mention the necessity of—

(i) A list of articles necessary to start an ordinary camp.

STATEMENT A.

Famine Relief Works under Superintendent of Works, Central Provinces.

Number.	Commissionership.	District.	Maximum number of charges.	Highest weekly average in any one month on the works.		Total number of day-units relieved from 1st January 1897 to 31st January 1898.	Total expenditure.	Cost per day-unit.		Remarks.
								Rupees.	Annas.	
1	Nagpur	Chanda	*Nil.*	...	...	...	...	...	...	
2		Nagpur	9	15,128	July	2·50 Millions.	3·92 Lakhs.	·157	2·60	
3		Wardha	2	5,133	May	·49 „	·76 „	·155	2·48	
4		Bhandara	7	22,777	June	4·80 „	7·89 „	·164	2·62	
5		Balaghat	12	56,112	May	10·45 „	10·97 „	·105	1·98	
6	Chhattisgarh	Raipur	18	78,428	„	13·35 „	14·66 „	·109	1·74	
7		Bilaspur	13	43,750	August	8·10 „	10·54 „	·129	2·06	
8		Sambalpur	1	1,626	May	·18 „	·23 „	·128	2·04	
9		Chhattisgarh States	4	10,717	„	1·24 „	1·73 „	·140	2·24	
		Total	66	...	...	41·11 Millions.	50·70 Lakhs.	Average ·136	2·17	
10	Jubbulpore	Seoni	4	12,824	...	1·06 Millions.	...	...	...	These districts were only in my charge to the end of May 1897.
11	Nerbudda	Chhindwara	2	5,959	...	·50 „	...	...	...	
		Total	72	...	...	42·67 Millions.	...	...	...	

(ii) A standard plan of the arrangements for the head-quarters, showing the best positions for the different sets of quarters and the sizes of each, also the best type of shelter-sheds for labourers.

(iii) A standard section of a road showing the widths of roadway berms and side pits, with a plan showing the best sizes for side-pits and their distances apart.

(iv) A set of instructions showing the best and simplest way to set out and measure up tasks of earth-work, metal-breaking, etc., also of making payments both on task and piece-work.

(v) A full sample set of the field accounts required for task and piece-work fully entered up in every particular as a guide, and not merely a blank set of forms.

(vi) A Ready Reckoner or wage list, and a table of task and rates for all sorts of piece-work, showing the variation in the rate as the price of grain rises, and the exact sum per hundred cubic feet payable to the labourer and the contractor in the case of each class.

(vii) A set of conditions showing exactly the terms on which piece-workers may be employed.

(viii) A plain and simple set of kitchen rules with sample forms all filled in as a guide, and with these a standard plan of the best arrangement for the kitchen-sheds and feeding compound.

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STATEMENT B.

Roads on which Famine Relief Workers have been employed in the Nagpur Civil Division (vide *Index Plan*).

No.	District.	Name of Road.	Total mileage.	Miles on which Relief Workers were employed.	Remarks.
		Nagpur Civil Division.			
1	Nagpur . .	Civil Station Roads . .	16	16	Repairs.
2	Do. . .	Telingkheri-Ambajheri . .	3	3	Construction.
3	Do. . .	Nagpur-Umrer . . .	27	15	Metalling.
4	Do. . .	Umrer-Bhewapur . . .	15	6	Do.
5	Do. . .	Nagpur-Kalmeshwar . .	13	9	Repairs.
6	Do. . .	Kalmeshwar-Katol . .	23	10	Metalling.
7	Do. . .	Eastern Road . . .	31	4	Repairs.
8	Do. . .	Great Northern Road . .	46	24	Do.
		Mansar-Ramtek . . .	4	4	Do.
		(I) Total .	178	91	
9	Wardha . .	Wardha-Pownar . . .	5	2	Metalling.
10	Do. . .	Arvi-Ashti	15	15	Construction.
		(II) Total .	23	17	
11	Bhandara . .	Tumsar-Rampailli . . .	30	30	Metalling.
12	Do. . .	Amgaon-Satgaon . . .	10	8	Construction.
13	Do. . .	Gondia-Arjuni . . .	28	28	Do.
14	Do. . .	Gondia-Balaghat . . .	12	13	Repairs.
15	Do. . .	Bhandara Railway Station .	7	7	Do.
16	Do. . .	Bhandara Station Roads .	14	14	Do.
		(III) Total .	101	99	
17	Balaghat . .	Balaghat-Baihar . . .	42	24	Construction.
18	Do. . .	Lamtha-Baihar . . .	32	1	Repairs.
19	Do. . .	Balaghat-Gondia . . .	15	15	Do.
20	Do. . .	Amgaon-Langi . . .	16	16	Construction, 3 miles in Bhandara.
21	Do. . .	Langi-Balaghat . .	32	22	Do.
22	Do. . .	Lalbarra-Rampailei . .	20	20	Do.
		Waraseoni-Katangi . .	21	12	Do.
		(IV) Total .	178	110	

Abstract for Nagpur Civil Division.

Nagpur District	178	91	
Wardha do.	20	17	
Bhandara do.	101	99	
Balaghat do.	178	110	
Chanda do.	...	...	
Total .	477	327	

Note.—Some Tank construction was also undertaken in Balaghat (Baihar Tahsil), 9 in number.

STATEMENT B—*concld.*

Roads on which Famine Relief Workers have been employed in the Chhattisgarh Civil Division—(vide *Index Plan*)—(concld.)

No.	District.	Name of Road.	Total mileage.	Miles on which Relief Workers were employed.	Remarks.
		Chhattisgarh Civil Division.			
1	Raipur	Tilda-Simga . . 9	34	9	Metalling.
2	Do.	Simga-Kawardha Border 25		21	Construction.
3	Do.	Rajpur-Dhamtari Line (Raipur to Mana)	7	7	Do.
4	Do.	Do. (Arung)	22	6	Renewal in first 6 miles, metalling the rest.
5	Do.	Do. (Karora)	21	6	Metalling.
6	Do.	Kumhari-Patharia	15	5	Construction.
7	Do.	Drug-Balod	32	27	Do.
8	Do.	Drug-Dhamda . . 21	47	5	Metalling.
9	Do.	Dhamda-Deokar . . 7		7	Construction.
10	Do.	Deokar-Bemetara . . 19		9	Do.
11	Do.	Dhamda-Gandai		2	Do.
12	Do.	Gandai-Kawardha	22	12	Do.
		Bhatapara-Loan (Border to Loan)	20	6	Moorum soling.
13	Do.	Loan to Border	16	7	Metalling.
		Baloda-Palari	9	6	Construction.
14	Do.	Palari-Kharora	9	9	Do.
	Do.	Tilda-Sirpur Road	18	...	Do.
			31	17	Do.
		Total	303	161	
	Bilaspur	Bilaspur-Mungeli (Kathakoni to Mungeli)	22	22	Construction.
	Do.	Bilaspur-Masturi	10	10	Metalling.
	Do.	Do. Ratanpur	15	15	Do.
	Do.	Do. Railway Station	2	2	Construction.
	Do.	Kotah-Lormi	23	12	Do.
	Do.	Lormi to Border	5	...	Do.
	Do.	Akaltara-Baloda	9	9	Metalling.
	Do.	Do. Pamgarh	11	11	Do.
	Do.	Champa Railway Station and through village	3	3	Construction.
	Do.	Bhatapara Nandghat	11	11	Do.
	Do.	Nandghat-Mungeli	23	23	Do.
	Do.	Mungeli-Setgunga	9	...	Do.
	Do.	Bhatapara-Baloda	11	...	Metalling.
	Do.	Powni-Katangi to Border	15	3	Construction.
		Total	169	128	
	Sambalpur	Kharsia-Dabra	15	8	Construction.
		Total	15	8	
	Chhattisgarh States	Pendra-Parsia	26	19	Construction.
	Do.	Pandaria-Lormi	15	15	Do.
	Do.	Nandgaon-Antagarh Road	19	19	Do.
	Do.	Dongargarh-Chouki to Border	16	16	Do.
		Total	76	69	

Abstract for Chhattisgarh Civil Division.

Raipur District	303	161
Bilaspur do.	169	128
Sambalpur do.	15	8
Chhattisgarh States	76	69
Total	563	366

Note.—Two Tanks incomplete—one on the Drug-Balod Road; the other at Tilda.

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Calculations as to the average number of Day-units on a Road construction—earth-work.

Taking an average road in the plains with a 2 ft. bank, 21 ft. formation, width and sides slopes 2 to 1, the area of the section per c. ft. will be 50 sq. ft.

The number of c. ft. per mile is .	5,280×50=264,000
If the task per digger is 90 c. ft., the number of diggers required would be	$\frac{264000}{90}$= 2,933
and the number of carriers may be taken at twice the number of diggers, or . . .	5,866
Total .	8,799
(i) And taking into consideration the dressing and breaking of clods the total may be . .	9,000

Moorum collection and carriage to the road-side.

The quantity required per mile is 5,280×12×$\frac{3}{4}$=47,520 c. ft.

Taking the digging task at 60 c. ft., the number of diggers required would be .	$\frac{47520}{60}$= 792
or say .	800
(ii) Suppose the moorum quarries are at an average distance of ½ mile from the road. Each carrier brings ⅓ c. ft. in each trip and walking 11 miles per day makes 11 trips with full baskets. The daily task of each is this .	11×⅓=3·66
or say .	4 c. ft.
(iii) and the number of carriers for the full quantity would be . . .	$\frac{47520}{4}$=11,880

Metal-breaking and stacking.

Supposing rubble already collected at road-side and two 4½″ of metal are to be stacked, the quantity required	=(2)×5,280×9×$\frac{3}{8}$= 35,680
Taking the average task for men and women at 5.	
(iv) The number required would be	$\frac{35680}{5}$= 7,136
and with staking, say .	8,000

The total number units per mile on a new road would thus be—

Earthwork	9,000
Moorum digging	800
„ carrying	11,880
Metal-breaking	8,000
Total .	29,680

For the *moorum* consolidation 10 people are required for each 100 r. ft. or 520 per mile, making a grand total of 30,200 or say 30,000 per mile omitting metal consolidation which is not suitable work.

[APPENDIX TO NOTE OF 17TH FEBRUARY 1898.]

NOTE ON MR. HIGHAM'S REPORT ON THE MANAGEMENT OF FAMINE RELIEF WORKS.

I.—Classification of relief workers on Task-work.

Notwithstanding the objections to task-work set forth in paragraphs 23 to 25 of Mr. Higham's Report, it is an admitted fact that in many cases it is the only system possible and therefore the details connected with the classification, wages, etc., must receive due consideration.

The Central Provinces Code prescribes four classes of adults exclusive of special and children. This classification undoubtedly requires simplification, and in practice from the very first class C was omitted, but it was still very unwieldy on account of the division of each class into men and women, and the sub-division of children into two classes. These sub-divisions complicated the gang register, the payments, and the initial accounts and altogether served no useful purpose.

Mr. Higham proposes a "special" class, and divides the whole of the rest of the adult workers into two classes without making any distinction between men and women. He calls these classes "diggers" and "carriers", but as the terms do not accurately denote the work they will be required to perform it would be preferable to call them Classes II and III.

As regards children those between 12 and 16 he proposes to put in Class III, and to have one class only as workers, *viz.*, those between 7 and 12.

This classification is altogether a great improvement and will simplify the registers. A glance at the wage table, Appendix VIII of G. O. No. C-498, of 26th December 1896, shows how unnecessary was any sub-division of the classes into men and women as the wages of male "other workers" were practically the same as the adult females.

One class of children as workers instead of the two prescribed in G. O. No. C-498, is also an improvement, and I entirely agree that children under 7 should be excluded from the works.

The four classes as per paragraph 15 of Mr. Higham's Report will be—

Workers { Class I (special), „ II, „ III, and children between 7 and 12, and

this simple classification will meet all requirements and serve every purpose.

II.—Wages.

The wages proposed for each class (paragraphs 12 to 14) as compared with those authorized in the Central Provinces Code, is shown below:—

Central Provinces Famine Code, Page 28.				New Classification.			
Class.	*Chittaks.*			Class.	*Chittaks.*		
	Men.	Women.	Children.		Men and Women.	Children.	
A	21	19	Variable as per age and powers of work.	I	21		
B	19	17		II	19		
C	16	15		III	13	8	
D	14	13					

There will be no women in Class I and very few in Class II so that the wages for these are practically the same as before. The great majority of the workers, men and women, will be in Class III, and here the new scale of wages is less for men than in the old. The Code in paragraph 84 lays down the minimum wage for adult males to be the price of 14 chittaks of grain. Whether this minimum should be lowered is a point for consideration.

In paragraphs 9 and 16 of his Report Mr. Higham recommends that whenever circumstances permit the workers should be given an opportunity of earning something higher than the minimum wage, and he suggests that when the number of—

(i) carriers does not exceed the number required for the diggers by more than 10 per cent. an extra wage should be allowed for both diggers and carriers when the diggers perform a task 25 per cent. in excess of the full task, but when the—

(ii) carriers exceed the number required by more than 10 per cent. the diggers only should be entitled to the extra wage;

(iii) if however, the Sunday wage is abolished, diggers and carriers should all be allowed to earn an extra wage, irrespective of the proportion that the latter may bear to the former.

The procedure with regard to the Sunday wage in the Central Provinces is that only those labourers are paid who have been at least three days at work, and has no relation whatever to the task performed. I would recommend that the Sunday wage be abolished and that all be allowed to earn one extra day's wage any time during the week by performing a task at least 25 per cent. in excess of the full task set, and that this 25 per cent. need not be done in one day but that the excess be allowed to accumulate from day to day until the 25 per cent. extra is earned.

Revenue Department Circular No. 1915 of 7th April 1897.

If the new classification and wages be accepted the Wage table on page 54 of Central Provinces Code will require recasting, and it is not necessary to go beyond 12 seers to the rupee as at a lower rate than this relief-works will be closed. The wages should be worked out to the nearest *pice* as in the Ready Reckoner in Appendix VIII of G. O. No. C.-498, which is in a much more convenient form.

III.—Method of Payments.

This is discussed in paragraphs 17 and 18 of Mr. Higham's Report, and the advantages and disadvantages of weekly or bi-weekly payments compared with daily, payments are set forth at some length.

It is stated in the concluding portion of his paragraph 17 that "in the Central Provinces wages are paid bi-weekly." This may have been the case on the Jubbulpore side, but daily payments were the general rule throughout the Nagpur and Chhattisgarh Civil Divisions. There is not the least doubt in my mind as to which system is the more preferable of the two, and I made a point of introducing daily payments wherever it could possibly be done.

The three great advantages it possesses outweigh anything that can be said on the other side:—

(i) It is easily understood by the workers and each previous day's work is settled for finally in the next following.

(ii) It is much more difficult to defraud the workers, and if fictitious entries are made the fraud is not at the expense of the worker.

(iii) It does away with all necessity of nominal rolls which can with difficulty be dispensed with otherwise, and enables the registers to be quickly written up with merely the numbers in each class.

The one difficulty in the system of the large number of pice required daily on each work is not likely in future famines to affect the question, for I gather that never again will wholesale task-work be adopted and that this system will be the exception rather than the rule as the great majority of workers will be on piece-work of some sort.

As regards the actual details of paying out the wages, the system as described in Appendix I attached to the North-Western Provinces Notes, was adopted with but very little change on all ordinary task-works in my circle and answered very well.

IV.—Standard Task for an average Carrier-unit.

In paragraph 10 of his Report Mr. Higham explains the necessity for the determination of a standard task for an average carrier-unit, and in Appendix I he enters into the question at some length.

The problem is to determine for different lifts and leads the minimum complement of carriers required for a company of diggers who are set a full task of T cubic feet per diem.

It is explained that the "reduced lead" on which a carrier's task must be based consists of three factors:—

(i) Initial effort,

(ii) Horizontal lead,

(iii) Vertical lift,

and if the first and third can be expressed in terms of the second the sum of these three will represent the *reduced lead*. He considers that the "initial effort," which includes a vertical lift of three feet is equivalent to a lead of 72 feet horizontally, and that each one foot lift vertically is equal to a 12 feet horizontal lead; this ratio of 1 to 12 being the average of the several authorities quoted.

From these data the "*reduced lead*" is expressed symbolically in a simple formula:—

$$R = 72 + H + 12\,(V-3)$$
$$= 36 + H + 12\,V$$

He next considers the task of an average famine carrier-unit and forms the conclusion that the "maximum" task that can be expected expressed in terms of cubic feet multiplied into the "reduced lead," may be taken at 12,500, that is to say 12·5 feet may be carried over a reduced lead of 1,000 feet. For "ordinary" task, entitling a famine coolie to the minimum wage, he considers a reduction of 20 per cent. may be made, and that the standard famine task per carrier-unit may be taken at 10,000, that is to say 10 cubic feet over a reduced lead of 1,000 feet or 100 cubic feet over 100 lineal feet.

i. e., $C = T \times R$, *i. e.*, constant $C = 10{,}000$.

He observes that in almost all soils the average lead carried seems to approximate to $\frac{1}{3}$ of a cubic foot and with the above carrier-unit a day's work would represent each basket-load being carried 30,000 feet or 5·68 miles, the carrier returning with the empty basket, or 11·36 miles in all.

The Table of Standard Tasks in Appendix VII of the Central Provinces Code is based on the data that an A Class man will carry $\frac{1}{3}$ cubic foot seven miles and return with the empty basket, making 14 miles in all.

A C Class man or B Class woman, who may be compared with the ordinary carrier-unit of the above calculations, is entered as capable of doing $\frac{1}{3}$ the task for Class A, so that according to the Code the carrier-unit will only go seven miles in all, but this comparison is not quite correct, because the Code takes the ratio of vertical lift to horizontal lead at 1 in 20 instead of at 1 in 12 as in Mr. Higham's calculations.

In paragraph 10 of his Note Mr. Higham compares the tasks per carrier-unit deduced from his formula with those derived from the Standard Task tables of various Provincial Codes taking a B Class woman or C Class man, equivalent to his carrier-unit.

Taking the ordinary conditions on an ordinary road in the plains, he finds the tasks proposed are all higher than those of the Central Provinces Code, and the divergence is greater in the higher lifts, thus:—

Lift and Lead.	Reduced lead (R).	Task per carrier-unit (T).	C. P. Code Task.
50 ft. lead, 5 ft. lift . . .	*146	†68	60
150 „ 5 „	246	41	30
50 „ 20 „	326	31	15
150 „ 20 „	426	23	12

* $R = 36 + 50 + (12 \times 5) = 146$

† $T = \frac{C}{R} = \frac{10{,}000}{146} = 68$

This is due to the difference in the ratio of vertical lift to the horizontal lead, and he asserts that the 1 in 12 taken by him is more in accordance with observed facts than the 1 in 20 of the Code.

Having determined the constant for the task of an average carrier's unit the calculation of the number of carrier-

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units required in any gang is a very simple matter and is found thus:—

$$\text{Number required} = \frac{\text{T (task)} \times \text{R (reduced lead)}}{\text{10,000 (constant)}}$$

and in making up the number children under 12 are counted as ½ units.

Having set forth Mr. Higham's proposals it remains to be seen how far these accord with my own observations. In an ordinary road in the plains in the Central Provinces the greatest part of the earthwork will be in ordinary black or brown soil. In such soil a professional digger and his mate, either a man or woman, will undertake on piece-work to dig and carry from an ordinary roadside pit a quantity of earthwork measuring $10\frac{1}{2}' \times 10\frac{1}{2}' \times 1$ or 110 cubic feet in one day.

In this case the lead is 50 ft., the lift up to 5 ft., so that the "reduced lead"—

$$R = 36 + 50 + (12 \times 5) = 146,$$

and the carrier-unit is:—

Task lead $110 \times 146 = 16{,}060$.

If an ordinary famine coolie carrier-unit be taken at 10,000 as suggested, the task would have to be—

$$T. = \frac{10{,}000}{146} = 68 \text{ cubic feet.}$$

In Bengal it is assumed that a famine coolie will do ⅝ths of an ordinary task, and taking this as a standard the task would also be $\frac{5}{8} \times 110 = 68$ cubic feet.

In actual practice during the present famine a task of 90 cubic feet was usually set on the assumption that the diggers were B Class men, but when it was possible to take any measurements on the crowded task-work charges it was rarely found that this task was completed, and the average outturn seemed to be between 60 and 70 cubic feet. All these appear to agree very approximately with Mr. Higham's calculations as regards the low lifts, and his figures for the higher lifts are at all events consistent, which is more than can be said for those in the Code, for the carrier-constant in these appear to vary in the most unaccountable way, as shown in the accompanying table, the figures being taken from paragraph 19 of his Note, thus:—

Lift and Lead.	Reduced lead (R.)	C. P. Code Task (T.)	Value of constant (R. × T.)	Proposed task.	Value of constant.
50 ft. lead and 5 ft. lift	146	60	8,760	68	Very approximately 10,000 in each case.
150 „ „	246	30	7,380	41	
550 „ „	646	10	6,460	15	
50 „ 20 ft. lift	326	15	4,890	31	
150 „ „	426	12	5,112	23	
550 „ „	826	7	5,782	12	

The nearest approach that can be made to the Code tasks is by assuming the carrier-unit task as 8,000, when the tasks will appear thus:—

Lift and Lead.	Reduced lead (R.)	Value of constant (C.)	Calculated task $\frac{C}{R}$.	C. P. Code task.
50 ft. lead, 5 ft. lift	146	8,000	55	60
150 „ „	246		32	30
550 „ „	646		12	10
50 „ 20 ft. lift	326		24	15
150 „ „	426		18	12
550 „ „	826		9	7

I am unable to verify by actual experience the tasks of the higher lifts, but if the 10,000 carrier-unit is adopted I cannot see how they can logically be rejected. The only alternative is to accept the lower carrier-unit of 8,000 if it be considered that the Central Provinces Code tasks ought not to be very considerably altered and with this the most ordinary task is too low.

IV.—Fines.

Paragraph 19 of Mr. Higham's Report deals with the question of accounting for fines, but not with the amount of the fine.

The Central Provinces Code lays down that labourers Code, paragraph 61. should never earn less than the mini- „ „ 84. mum wage except temporarily—and this minimum wage is the price of 14 chittaks of grain for a man and 13 for a woman. The Code does not give the money equivalent of the penal wage.

In fining it is usual to give the labourers the wages of the next lower class except in the case of what were D Class who were not fined at all.

Note.—This only refers to metal breaking. On earthwork only diggers were fined.

Taking the classes proposed and the wages from the table in G. O. No. C.-498, the fines inflicted on Class II would be then as below:—

Seers.

	12	11	10	9½	9	8½	8	7½	7	6½	6
Class II, 19 chittaks	1·6	1·9	1·9	2·0	2·0	2·3	2·3	2·6	2·9	3·0	3·3
„ III, 13 „	1·0	1·3	1·3	1·3	1·6	1·6	1·6	1·9	1·9	2·0	2·3
Difference	·6	·6	·6	·9	·6	·9	·9	·9	1·0	1·0	1·0

It would perhaps be preferable to deduct in every case a fixed sum of 2 pice for a fine from Class II instead of a varying wage as it would be more easily understood, and if Class III is to be fined the amount as well as that of Class II it should be clearly laid down in the Code. In my opinion the whole gang should always be fined and not the diggers only.

As regards the accounting for the fine it has been the custom in my circle to show the normal wages which could have been earned, and for that work to deduct the fine amount from the total, the amount actually paid being taken into the derived accounts where no mention of the fine is to be found. Mr. Higham proposes to show this fine throughout the derived accounts so as "to ascertain the works on which fining has been excessive."

I cannot see that any advantage is to be gained by burdening the derived accounts with this item, and considering the number of inspecting officers who have access to a relief-work the question as to whether the fining has been excessive is much better ascertained on the work from the gang registers than in the office by a half monthly return.

V.—Relief of Dependents.

There is not likely to be much difference of opinion amongst those who have had actual experience of relief-works as to the best method of relieving dependents on workers.

The system of a cash dole has been a complete failure and has led to great abuses.

The only way to deal with these is to have kitchens on the works and give all children under 7 and adult dependents cooked rations.

Code, paragraph 82.

The Central Provinces Code, paragraph 96, prescribes the ration to be given to all those fed at kitchens as—

16 oz. of grain for a man with condiments,
14 „ „ „ woman,

and ¾, ½ and ¼ rations for children according to age.

Mr. Higham proposes a uniform ration for a man and woman alike of 11 chittaks inclusive of all condiments, which is two chittaks below the minimum allowance for adult female workers—*vide* Central Provinces Code, paragraph 84.

Piece-work.

The development of the piece-work system in the Central Provinces may first be briefly described.

In Revenue Circular No. 841 of 11th February 1897, the Government of India were addressed on this subject, and in view of the extreme difficulty of enforcing an adequate task and of providing the necessary establishment for supervision, it was suggested that a modified system of piece-work under certain conditions might be adopted. The main points of the system were that:—

(i) The work was to be entrusted to "gangers" or village headmen.

(ii) A fixed proportion of the rate was to be paid to the workers.

(iii) The "ganger" was to supply all minor establishment and perishable stores and to receive a fixed proportion of the rates paid as a remuneration.

(iv) The size of the gangs was to be limited to 200 and the outturn of the work to the value of ₹1,000 per month.

The system is the same as that introduced in the North-Western Provinces, and known there as the "Intermediate" system, and it was suggested it should be tried in these Provinces in parts not acutely distressed as an optional measure.

Its introduction was approved of by the Government of India, and Commissioners were addressed in the Central Provinces' Revenue Circular No. 1685 of 22nd March 1897, in which it was stated that the criterion to be applied in judging whether the system could be safely applied was whether considerable numbers of labourers seeking employment are inefficient or not. The dangers of the system were pointed out, and it was expressly stated that if it were tried in any severely distressed tracts care should be taken that a task-work was sufficiently near to afford an alternative mode of relief to persons desiring to adopt it.

G. O. No. 305 / 3571 — 15-5-1897.

A general order in the Public Works Department was issued in May giving instructions relating to the introduction of the piece-work system, and all Public Works Officers were directed to take prompt measures to carry them out.

The main points insisted on were:—

(i) The system was to be introduced gradually, no sudden changes being effected.

(ii) The rates were to be sufficient to enable an able-bodied labourer to support his dependents.

(iii) If "infirm gangs" were found necessary they were to be drafted to the nearest task-work charge, and task-work charges should if possible be arranged alternately with piece-work.

(iv) The rates might be fixed at certain percentage above the ordinary rates, but they must vary with the price of grain, at the same time they were not such as to attract labour for which there existed employment elsewhere.

(v) The employment of large and reliable contractors was suggested who would undertake to arrange for all establishment and payments, and who would be paid for work done on a regular schedule of rates.

(vi) In charges still retained on ordinary task-work piece-work might gradually be substituted for the task.

Revenue Circular No. 385-322, 28-5-1897.

These instructions were a few days later on supplemented by further ones in which it was stated that "infirm gangs" might be permitted to work on the task-work system side by side with the piece-workers if there was no task-work charge within reasonable distance.

(ii) For the conversion of a task-work charge to a piece-work the inefficient labour should be more than 25 per cent.

(iii) The separation of labourers into those able to live by piece-work and those not so able was to be conducted by a medical officer.

Early in June some rules were drawn up by the Superintendent of Works for the guidance of Executive Engineers, but were shortly afterwards modified in some particulars, and under these piece-work was largely introduced in both the Chhattisgarh and Nagpur Civil Divisions.

C. P. No. C-562, 4-8-1897.

In giving approval to these rules the Secretary to Chief Commissioner of the Public Works Department remarked that there were certain points in the rules which conflicted with the orders about to be issued regarding the introduction of a system of "payment by results," but that no changes need be made where piece-work had already been introduced and the system was in good working order, but where they had not been introduced the principles set forth in the memorandum about to be issued were to be observed.

Revenue Circular No. 579-5700, 7-8-1897.

Early in August a memorandum by the Chief Commissioner on the introduction of a system of "payment by results" was circulated, and it was stated that these orders superseded all those inconsistent with them then in operation, and it was remarked that the tendency of the conditions hitherto in force to stimulate activity by a promise of larger payments for more work done must be abandoned.

The system is the same as that known in the North-Western Provinces as the "Modified Intermediate System," and was advocated to meet the situation at the particular period when a considerable number of able-bodied labourers had returned to their villages and left a larger proportion of inefficient people on the works than was contemplated when the former piece-work rules were introduced.

The intention of the orders was, as described in Central Provinces' Revenue Department letter No. 1671, dated 2nd September 1897, to the Government of India, to substitute for a system of general piece-work with task-work for the infirm and weakly, a system of general task-work with piece-work for those specially selected as able-bodied; it was possible under the former system for weakly persons to be included amongst piece-workers through an oversight, and under the new rules this should be impossible.

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The main points in connection with the new system were:—

(i) Every work was to have a task-work annexed.

(ii) The principle to be enforced was stated to be that able-bodied labour is not to be paid except by results, while insufficient labour must be paid enough to enable it to live.

(iii) No contractors were to be employed and the piece-work was to be carried out under the supervision of the officer in charge and Government establishment.

(iv) Wages were to be so pitched as not to exceed the D Class or lowest wage. Labourers were not to be allowed to earn more than this, and for short task they would only be paid for work actually done.

(v) Dependents were to be treated separately and in the same manner as dependents of task-workers, food at the kitchens being given to them in preference to a money dole.

The rules were not to be brought into force on day work without the consent of the Commissioner, and where charges had already been organized on the previous piece-work rules no change was to be made; but on task-works still unconverted the new principles were to be applied.

Piece-work System.

A report from each Executive Engineer on the working of the piece-work system introduced into each district has been received and included information on the following heads:—

(i) Date of introduction.

(ii) Precautionary measures taken to protect the weakly.

(iii) Condition of the people at the time of introduction.

(iv) The effect of the introduction on the numbers.

(v) The period the system was in force and the effect on the workers.

The reports are all very similar. Piece-work in any form was at first distasteful to the workers, coming as it did after task-work. It had the effect of reducing numbers at first, as the idlers left the works; but confidence became restored when they found payments were made regularly, and that they could earn a larger wage by more work under the ordinary piece-work system.

Piece-work was introduced very largely into each of the seven distressed districts, but a task-work with kitchen was always attached.

Ordinary Public Works petty contractors were employed and were found most useful, accustomed as they were to the management of workpeople. The best work was turned out under this system, but it was more expensive as almost the same establishment had to be maintained.

The "payment by results" system was most unpopular. It was largely introduced in Bhandara and slightly in Balaghat but in no other districts. It was tried in Bilaspur but had the effect of clearing the charges to such an alarming extent that task-work was quickly re-introduced. In Chhattisgarh the Commissioner did not consider the condition of the people anywhere suitable for this system, except on the Raipur-Dhamtari Line where it was introduced to a small extent only in connection with task-work.

The objections to piece-work are fully stated in the extracts from the report of the Famine Commission (paragraphs 132-133), and the whole question of the advisability of the introduction into the Famine Code of some sort of piece-work system, without any rigid adherence to any one particular form, is so exhaustively discussed in Mr. Higham's Note that it is not necessary to say more on the subject. Experience has shown that it may be safely introduced and that the effect under proper supervision is in every way beneficial if the interests of the more weakly members are safeguarded by task-work and kitchens in connection with it.

Paragraph 38.

Mr. Higham suggests that the question as to the conditions under which piece-work should be adopted is one that might be left in the first place to the Public Works Department the Civil Officers watching the results and making such representations as they considered necessary.

He recommends that (i) when distress first appears a more active prosecution of ordinary public works might be adopted as a means of obviating the necessity of opening relief works under the Famine Code.

Paragraph 41 (K) ii to iv. Paragraph (K) iv, v, vi.

Should it become necessary, this is to be followed up by a system of piece-work with or without relief to dependents—and as distress deepens a combination of piece and task-work or, in the case of acute distress, task-work alone with or without the option of earning a higher wage than that pertaining to the class.

Paragraph 41 (L).

Relief to dependents to depend on the degree of distress and only to be given on the recommendation of the District Officer; when such relief is necessary it should be given by means of cooked rations in kitchens.

To these recommendations I have nothing to add except that the employment of Public Works petty contractors should not be barred, experience having shown that they are a most useful class of men under proper supervision.

The principles on which programmes of relief works should be drawn up.

The Government of India have concurred in the views expressed in paragraphs 25—29 of Mr. Higham's Report as to the desirability of including in relief work programmes a great number of large works of permanent utility, and that large works are preferable to small ones as the backbone of famine relief.

As irrigation canals are not required and as the light railways in the plateau and southern districts cannot be reserved, it is not possible to make any suggestions for large works of public utility applicable to these parts of the Provinces.

In their absence there is nothing to fall back upon but earthwork and the collection of materials for roads.

The present famine works have almost exhausted the district road schemes, and have left a large number of unfinished works on our hands to be completed from ordinary sources.

The maintenance of these alone is a large item and the further multiplication of roads is not desirable, but there is absolutely nothing else to fall back upon, and a further careful selection of roads is all that can be entered in future programmes.

Although the construction of small scattered village tanks are not works of great public utility and are difficult to supervise, they might be combined with road projects and constructed in conjunction with these without scattering the labourers unduly; a good deal in this way might be done in many districts if the projects are carefully prepared beforehand.

Moorum and metal collection for existing lines of roads is an excellent form of famine labour, and although large stocks have now accumulated it is probable that these will all have been used up before the next great famine occurs.

Metal consolidation—with hand rammers by famine labourers—has been a failure throughout and should not again be attempted except in conjunction with rollers; it would be preferable to employ people breaking a further stock of metal during the rains than attempting consolidation of any stone.

The respective responsibilities of Civil and Public Works Officers.

As regards the responsibilities of Civil and Public Works Officers in charge of relief works, I consider that the procedure adopted in these Provinces and described in detail in paragraph 14 of Mr. Higham's Note on the famine relief works in the Central Provinces, has on the whole stood the practical test admirably and cannot be improved upon. In these arrangements the Public Works Department is primarily responsible for the conduct and the management of the relief works and maintains intact its own organisation and discipline, but the District Officers are kept fully informed of all that is being done and their advice taken in all important points.

Kitchens.

Paragraphs 77 and 97.

The Central Provinces Code did not apparently contemplate the necessity of kitchens on relief works themselves, but provided for the feeding of children and adult dependents

of relief workers at a central village in a group contained in a circle of 5 miles diameter.

The rules for the construction of children's kitchens and for administering this form of relief are set forth in Appendix V of the Code.

The rules on the management of these kitchens appear to have been taken from the Madras Code and the main points touched upon are:—

(i) The numbering of each kitchen and the maximum number of people each is to contain.

(ii) The sub-division of the occupants into caste sections.

(iii) The issuing of children's tickets and the classification of children into four messes according to age.

(iv) The establishment required and the duties of each member.

(v) The times of the meals; and some remarks on the eating utensils.

(vi) The inspection of the kitchens and payment of food contractors.

In connection with these rules five forms are prescribed, which are rather elaborate and overloaded with detail.

Paragraph 6, Revenue Circular No. 214, dated 15th January 1897. Revenue Circular No. 727, dated 8th January 1897.

At the commencement of relief operations attention was drawn to the advisability of starting kitchens in connection with each large work under the Public Works Department, and early in February it was directed that new applicants, who were found incapable of labour, should be dieted in the kitchens before being put on the works.

Revenue Department No. 1779, dated 29th January 1897.

In March some rules for the regulation of kitchens in relief works drawn up by the Commissioner, Nerbudda Division, were circulated, but these were not generally adopted as they were considered too elaborate for the limited staff available to deal with.

Circular No. 1326-29, dated 9th July 1897.

Up to July the kitchens on the relief works were kept entirely for children and dependents connected with the workers, but their scope was now enlarged and instructions were issued to admit all applicants obviously in need of food, and emaciated children in the neighbourhood whether connected with the workers or not.

In August some rules which had been drawn up by the late Mr. Priest, Commissioner of Jubbulpore, for the regulation of kitchens on relief works were introduced, but as the six sets of forms connected with them involved considerable clerical labour they were superseded by some simple instructions drawn up by Mr. J. B. Fuller, Commissioner of Jubbulpore, a copy of which is attached. In these, the recipients were divided into two classes—those connected with the works, and those unconnected.

The rations for adults and children were specified, and the form of a simple attendance register was attached on which the amount of food used was also shown.

The only other form said to be necessary was an ordinary account of receipts and expenditure.

These forms have been adhered to in every district except Nagpur, where, as a very complete statement was already in use, no change was considered advisable.

Considering that the kitchens have to be managed by the Hospital Assistants whose time is very fully occupied with other matters connected with the Camp, it is very desirable that both the instructions and the forms be of the simplest possible character. I would suggest a modification of the one which was in use at Nagpur, a sample of which, fully entered up, is attached for reference. There appears to be no particular object in dividing the recipients into any further classes than the natural ones of men and women and children, and in the form attached, the daily attendance and expenditure for a full week is clearly shown, as well as the rate per unit and total expenditure. In connection with this return a daily receipt and issue form is required of the articles of food and a stock return of the utensils in use. Nothing more appears to be necessary and an almost exactly similar form has served its purpose well throughout the famine in the Nagpur District. The statements should be bound in book-form for use in the Camp, a copy in a loose sheet being sent daily to the Sub-Divisional Officer at the end of the week.

Charge No._____.

_____DIVISION.

Weekly Kitchens Return for week ending _____ *189* .

Name of Camp_____. Hospital Assistant in charge_____. Officer in charge_____.

Date.	Number of persons fed.			Total.	Quantity and Expenditure during the week.				Date of opening kitchen.	Expenditure from beginning.	Remarks.
	Men.	Women.	Children.		Quantity.	Description.	Rate.	Amount.			
								R a. p.			
August 8th	64	15	222	301							
„ 9th	87	19	209	315	1,436 lbs. .	Rice . .	1 /- per 14 lbs.	102 9 3			
„ 10th	71	19	151	241							
„ 11th	60	31	275	366	222 lbs. .	Oil . .	1 /- per 13 lbs.	17 1 3		*R*	
„ 12th	57	30	275	362	2⅝ ch. .	Saffron . .	- /4 lbs. .	0 10 6	July 15th .	319	Rate per unit 0-0-9.
„ 13th	200	150	300	650	31 lbs. .	Salt . .	- /1 lb. .	1 15 0			
„ 14th	49	29	165	253	5⅓ ch. .	Chillies .	- /4 lbs. .	1 4 0			
Total .	592	304	1,582	2,478							
					Food total			123 8 0			
					Establishment			3 0 0			
					Miscellaneous			...			
							Grand Total .	126 8 0			

Hospital Assistant. *Officer in charge.*

Instruction for the management of Public Works Department Kitchens.

I.—These kitchens were originally intended for small children belonging to people on the works. Under recent orders all dependents, of whatever age, are to be admitted as well as any starving people unconnected with the workers who apply for food.

II.—The persons attending each kitchen will then be classed according as they are (*a*) connected with the works, and (*b*) unconnected with the works. Under Class (*a*) will fall all non-working dependents, whether children or adults, except babies in arms. Children over 7 who are too thin to do much work may be classed as dependents if they are willing to take cooked food. *No cash payment is to be made to any dependent.*

III.—Anyone who brings an order of admission from a Circle Officer (Revenue Inspector) or officer of superior rank must be admitted.

IV.—The food to be given is a "kitchri" of boiled rice and dhal—five parts rice, one part dhal; some salt should be added of course, and if possible a little ghi or oil. The standard measure should be a tinpot 4¾ inches in diameter and 2½ inches deep. This holds the cooked equivalent of 3 chattaks.

Three of these measures should be given to each adult man.

Two and three-quarters to each adult woman.

From one to two and-a-half to each child, according to age.

In preparing each day's food the average may be taken as 5 chattaks.

V.—It is well to distribute twice daily if possible. But if the kitchen is crowded this will be difficult and one meal will suffice. People should be allowed to take away what they cannot eat on the spot.

VI.—One cook will suffice for 150 to 200 children. A water-carrier and muharrir will be required, and perhaps a warder to keep order.

VII.—Persons of Class (*a*) will be shown as at present on the register of their gang. The gang muharrir should give each of them a ticket showing—

Number of gang.
Name and class.
Date of issue.

It will be well to maintain a separate attendance register for persons of Class (*b*), giving names in the first column and providing a column for each day in the month. They also should be given tickets.

VIII.—The attendance of each day should be abstracted in a register of the following form:—

Date.	Number Fed.												Amount of food used.
	Class (*a*).						Class (*b*).						
	Gang No.	Men.	Women.	Children I.	Children II.	Children III.	Men.	Women.	Children I.	Children II.	Children III.	Total.	

Receipts and expenditure should be shown in a simple form of *jama kharch*, extracts from which will serve as bills for replenishing an imprest or as vouchers for expenditure. The amount of food charged for in the *jama kharch* should of course correspond with the amounts shown in the attendance register.

IX.—Kitchen tickets should be furnished with a string so as to be carried hung on the neck. A convenient material is thin sheet of zinc on which entries can be written indelibly with either sulphuric acid or *nila tutia*.

Accounts.

As regards the accounts, Mr. Higham recommends that the whole question of rendering and auditing relief work accounts should be considered by a committee of experts with a view of simplifying and assimilating them as far as possible. He points out—

Para. 40.

(i) That the accounts are not at present based on a uniform plan as to permit comparisons with the returns of other Provinces.

(ii) They exhibit only figures for the particular week or other period to which they relate and not up to date figures.

(iii) Audited accounts were not obtainable showing up to date expenditure in comparison with work done or number of units relieved.

He further points out that the accounts, as at present compiled, are open to the following objections:—

Appendix II, para. 1.

(i) The returns derived from the initial accounts do not show the extent to which relief workers are fined.

(ii) The periodical returns do not compare the expenditure incurred with the value of the normal rates of the work done.

(iii) They do not show the tasks required compared with the task done.

(iv) Piece-work and task-work are not shown separately.

Personally, as I have already stated, I see no object in showing the fines in the derived accounts; they should to my mind be confined to gang registers where they are open to the criticism of all inspecting officers.

In connection with (ii) I am of the opinion that any comparison of expenditure with the value at the normal rates, if shown in periodical returns, will prove to be misleading and valueless. This is because the daily measurements, taken in a great hurry, are often only approximate and not sufficiently accurate, whilst the errors accumulate.

A correct comparison can only be obtained from final measurements as each section of the work is completed, and I have a case in my mind where the quantities of earthwork on a road, as shown in the weekly returns abstract, were from the above causes shown as three times the quantity obtained from final measurements. It is difficult to see what useful purposes the inclusion of such figures in periodical returns could serve; for purposes of comparison it is far better to wait a little longer and obtain reliable figures.

As regards showing in the derived accounts the tasks set and done, I do not see the need of carrying this beyond the gang register. It is dealt with there to the best of the abilities of the staff and, as in the case of fines, is open to all officers concerned to inspect and criticise—the mere fact of burdening the derived accounts with the additional figures involved does not assist in any way in getting better tasks out of the labourers, and any information on this point which may be called for is readily obtainable from the gang register.

The *Gang Register* should be as simple as it is possible to make it. The form adopted during the famine is open to several objections. It is not clear how the amount of fine is obtained, and the figures not being placed below the total, the actual amount paid is not directly apparent without doing a marginal sum.

More than one method of filling up the register appears to have been in force. In my Circle, rates of pay and amounts were filled in as if the task set would be done and fines deducted afterwards; but I understand that on the Jubbulpore side no wages or amounts were filled in until it was seen whether the task was accomplished; if it was not done no actual fine was shown but a reduction of the wages to a lower class was entered.

C. P. Notes, para. 7.

The accompanying sample form of gang register, which should be ruled for seven days, appears to me as clear and simple as it is possible to make it, and is what I would advocate.

Mr. E. Penny.

7th Mar. 1898.

The form of gang register adopted in the Central Provinces is the same as that of the North-Western Provinces, and this is objected to by Mr. Higham on the ground—

Para. 8, N.-W. P. Notes.

(i) that it does not show the details of daily musters,

(ii) or the amounts daily earned by and paid to each worker,

(iii) that it is maintained in duplicate, one copy being used for each alternate day.

When daily payments are made, and when no increase in the numbers is allowed in the gangs from one week's end to another, all that it is necessary to enter is the number in each class; any further entries such as the people's names, villages, caste, etc., are a useless waste of time.

In the Central Provinces the registers were not in duplicate, but two were kept going for each gang in alternate use. I should prefer a continuous register, as there would be no difficulty in arranging to check the accounts paid by the muharrirs, in place of their handing in the register after payment as a voucher.

The daily reports or abstracts of gang registers which are submitted by each muharrir for his gang must be in a simpler form than those shown in Central Provinces G. O. No. C-498, or they will never get submitted at all. The totals alone should be entered in these, and they should not be complicated by rates of daily pay which can be ascertained from the gang-register and are already entered there; a sample form is attached which will meet all requirements and which are similar to those in use throughout my Circle.

The officer-in-charge's day-book is merely an abstract of these, as per sample form No. III, the cash-book entry for each day being the total payments shown on this form. For anything further than these accounts the committee of experts may be left to decide upon, and I do not think it is of much use my entering here into further details.

The work abstract proposed by Mr. Higham in three Parts, Part I of which contains 20 columns and Part II 25 columns, appears to me a formidable document and to contain many more details than is absolutely necessary.

Gang-Register No. 1.

Mate (*Wages on 11 seers to Re. 1.*) (*Task-work.*)

Class.	April 1897.		8		9		10		Etc.
	Items.	Wages.	No.	Amount.	No.	Amount.	No.	Amount.	
		A. p. p.		*R a. p.*		*R a. p.*		*R a. p.*	
I	Mate . .	2 3 9	1	0 2 3	1	... ...	1	... ...	
II	Men . .	1 9 7	10	1 1 6	10	... ...	10	... ...	
	Women . .	1 6 6	...	... ...	...	... ...	...	... ...	
III	Men . .	1 6 6	25	2 5 6	25	... ...	25	... ...	
	Women . .	1 6 6	40	3 12 0	40	... ...	40	... ...	
IV	Children 7—12 .	... 9 3	4	0 3 0	4	... ...	4	... ...	
	Total .		80	7 8 3	80	7 8 3	80	7 8 3	
		A. p. p.							
	Fine .	0 6 2	76	2 6 0	...	... ...	76	2 6 0	
	Amount paid .		...	5 2 3	...	7 8 3	...	5 2 3	
	Signature of Muharrir .		Kesho Rao.		K. R.		K. R.		
			Due.	Done.	Due.	Done.	Due.	Done.	
	Task		800	720	800	810	800	740	
	Signature of Work Agent . .		M. Ismail.		M. I.		M. I.		
	Lead.				No. of carrier unit.				
	Lift.								
	Reduced lead.								

Day-Book of Muharrir. II

Name of work _____. *District* _____.

CHARGE. No. _____.

Date, April 8th.	Class I.	Class II.		Class III.		Class IV, Children.	Total paid.	Quantity of work done.		
		M.	W.	M.	W.			Earth-work.	Moorum.	Etc.
							R a. p.			
Gang No. 1 . .	1	10	...	25	40	4	5 2 3	720		
„ „ 2 . .	1	10	...	20	42	3				
„ „ 3 . .	1	10	...	22	38	4				
„ „ 4 . .	1	10	...	20	45	5				
„ „ 5 . .	1	10	...	24	36	3				
Total .	5	50	...	111	201	22				
9th										
No. 1 . .	1	10	...	25	40	4	7 8 3	810		
„ 2 . .										
„ 3 . .										
„ 4 . .										
„ 5 . .										
10th										

Day Book of Officer-in-Charge. III

Name of work _____. *District* _____.

CHARGE. No. _____.

DATE, APRIL 8TH.	Class I.	Class II.		Class III.		Class IV, Children.	Amount paid.	Work done.		
Muharrirs.		M.	W.	M.	W.			Earth-work.	Moorum.	Etc.
							R a. p.			
1. Kesho Rao . .	5	50	...	111	201	22	39 8 0			
2. Ram Singh .	6	60	...	120	240	30	45 6 0			
3. Faiz Muhammad .	5	50	...	110	180	20	38 3 0			
Total .	16	160	...	331	621	72	122 14 3			
9th										
1. Kesho Rao .										
2. Ram Singh .										
3. Faiz Muhammad .										
Total .										

NOTE.—The cash-book entry for the 8th will be the total for the day, *viz.*, Rs. 122-14-3.

Mr. E. Penny.

7th Mar. 1898.

(*President.*)—What part did you take in the last famine?—I was Superintendent of Works in connection with famine relief operations in November 1896 and continued in that post until the end of January 1898. My Circle included at first 10 Civil Districts, and the Chhattisgarh States.

With what Civil officers did you work?—I worked with my Executive Engineers, the Deputy Commissioner and with the Commissioners.

Did you not work under the Chief Engineer?—He was my direct head.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—Did you find it impossible to start any relief works except repairs of roads?—Yes, but we had also a few tank works.

Large tank works?—No, small ones.

Is there any possibility of making irrigation tanks?—Yes in certain selected sites and districts.

Any in the province?—No, none at all of any size.

Were any wells built by the District Fund?—No.

Do you think that the metal collection will be used by the District Funds for their roads?—They will be used by them some day.

Did you employ labour only in making new roads or also in maintaining the old roads?—Both.

Don't you think you have therefore relieved the District Funds from their legitimate work for some years?—Yes.

Are not the District Funds responsible for metalling their roads?—The main roads are Provincial, the others are constructed from the District Funds.

What I mean to say is that you have saved the District Funds of this work for some time to come?—Yes, to some extent.

Did you consolidate the roads?—Yes, but it was done badly.

Is stuff being collected?—Yes.

Did you do any hand-ramming?—Yes, but it was very difficult to get the coolies to do hand-ramming; they were a feeble sort, not fitted for that sort of work.

I saw it done at Madras?—Probably the material was not the same.

I suppose your work practically consisted of breaking metal and constructing embankments on the roads?—Yes, we also collected murrum and metal, and we tried consolidation, but it was never satisfactory.

There is then nothing left to be done at the next famine?—Earth-work and improvement of roads.

In answers to questions Nos. 104 to 107, you say that the number of carriers has been in excess of that given in the formula?—Yes, that is so.

You think that it renders a larger number of carriers necessary than calculated?—Yes, on piece-work we have to select the men.

You then selected diggers—what about carriers?—We selected them and put them to task-work.

Could you not have them together?—No.

Would not the people on task-work dig?—Yes.

Do I understand you to say that it is impossible to get the carriers to do the digger's work?—No, we have had to take a certain number of carriers on piece-work and put the balance on task-work.

Would you put every man who can dig on piece-work?—No, that depends on condition.

Did you employ a large number of coolies?—Yes.

Did you introduce piece-work?—Yes.

On the system of working under contractors?—Yes.

Did they employ any definite number of carriers?—They employed whom we drafted.

Did you give them a greater number of carriers than they wanted?—We tried to make them fit.

(*President.*)—Did that break families?—I suppose it must have, but I think they were together on piece-work and task-work, as far as possible.

(*Mr. Higham*).—In employing these people, what wages did you give?—Everybody got B wage.

Did you provide for dependants?—Not on piece-work.

If they all earned B wage, they were practically able to support their dependants, is it not so?—Yes.

That was a distinct departure from the Code?—Yes. In fact the contract work itself was a distinct departure from the Code.

Did the B wage include Sunday-wage?—Those people on piece-work could not receive more than the B wage.

If they did more?—They could not do more than the B task, unless they were professionals.

Have you got any statement to show the amount of work done by B workers?—No.

Having worked out the different rates, what margin of profit did you leave to the contractor?—Ordinarily 25 per cent., but in special cases where they undertook large works they were allowed 50 per cent. margin for expenses and profit.

That means half the cost of relief went to the contractor as profit?—No, expenses and profit.

In that case he would take over all the establishment, etc.?—Yes, the contractor was his own officer-in-charge with the Sub-Divisional Officer to supervise him occasionally. The contracter in such cases was a selected man.

What number had you in your charge?—About 10,000, and sometimes more.

And the contractor?—3,000 to 4,000 at the outside.

Were they all task-work men?—No.

Had one contractor more than one charge?—No.

Did the contractor live on the works?—Yes.

Had you any big contractor who undertook more than one work?—No.

If the wages of the men amounted to R200 a day, your contractor would make a profit of R100 a day?—No, not a profit, for he had to pay all establishment and petty charges. He was paid according to the outturn of work.

I suppose with 4,000 labourers taking an average earning of 1½ annas each worker, the daily wage would be 6,000 annas, and over this the contractor would be paid 3,000 annas a day, is that right?—Yes.

You paid nearly R400 a day in wages only?—Yes.

The contractor would get nearly R100 a day for himself and establishment?—Yes, but there are plenty of other expenses to be met besides these.

Very heavy payments?—Yes.

Your establishment on task-work did not come up to that?—No.

What check did you exercise on the payments made by the contractor?—He made payments daily, in the presence of the officer-in-charge.

How often was the contractor paid?—Once a week as a rule.

Then how do you know he paid correctly every day?—It is only a matter of supervision; the coolies never came with any complaints. The supervising officer generally inspected the works and found everything satisfactory.

How did he enquire?—He measured the work done, and saw that the works were kept correctly, that the number of the workers was correctly shown.

The contractor paid the men on the work done?—He had the works measured daily.

Did he keep a large establishment?—Yes.

How did he pay the workers?—He paid his own men, and they paid the gangs individually, through their own establishments.

Did they keep muster-rolls?—Yes, they had to send them in to us daily.

How often was the measurement checked?—I cannot say exactly how often—but now and then.

You say the contractor was paid weekly. Who examined his work?—Measurements were taken by the Sub-Divisional Officer.

Did he check them himself?—I cannot say.

I want to know whether the Sub-Divisional Officer entrusted the work to others or whether he did it himself, and satisfied himself that the men were properly paid?—I believe he did check the work himself. I am not absolutely certain.

Is it necessary to check the contractor when you put him in sole charge?—Well, only very reliable men were in charge. I only put three reliable men in charge; in other cases the contractors were not in charge.

The officer in charge saw that the payments were made daily ?—I suppose so.

Who selected the people who had to go on piece-work, and those who had to go on task-work ?—The Sub-Divisional Officer and the officer-in-charge.

What was the rule ?—The man's look and his condition.

Supposing you had a greater number of carriers than you required and that they were all in good condition, would you put them on piece-work ?—Yes.

Then you would have to go on something else besides look ?—Yes, in some cases.

Had you any particular proportion in selecting diggers and carriers for drafting ?—I think not.

If you gave the contractor too many carriers, would not the weaker gangs suffer ?—We tried to hit off as near as possible.

Then you practically tried to strike some proportion before you drafted them ?—Yes.

Will you be able to carry out relief works by contractors, doing the whole thing by piece-work ?—I would not attempt to do it by piece-work altogether. I would have task-work as well.

Would the contractors come if you had piece work in every camp ?—Yes.

You think that a sufficient number of contractors would be available ?—Yes.

Would you take them on as work-agents ?—Yes.

Would it not be better to employ them as work agents instead of giving them a percentage ?—Yes. I don't know how they will look at it. They would sooner work on their own terms.

When did you introduce the "payment-by-result" system ?—Later on, early in August.

Did the contractors work under this system ?—No. We had no contractors under this system.

Do you call this piece-work ?—No.

Whom did you put on this work ?—No one except the able-bodied; and gave them D wage.

Were they fined ?—Very seldom.

How do you compare the "payment-by-result" system with the Code system ?—I never compared it.

Did you lay down any rules ?—No. I would simply call it the lowest task on D wage.

What do you call D task ?—The lowest task.

The Central Provinces Code has no D task ?—No.

You gave them a very low task, something which they had no difficulty in performing ?—Well, they could not earn more than D wage. I do not think they liked it at all. It was never satisfactory.

If they did not like it, did they come to it ?—Yes, but they could walk off. They walked back to the task-work.

Would he be employed on task-work if he walked off ?—No, he would be re-drafted. They were always trying to get back to the task-work.

Had you any difficulty in getting diggers ?—No.

The men were in fair proportion towomen ?—Yes.

Did the diggers stay ?—They were also trying to get back.

How long was this tried ?—For about three months. The only difference between the task-work and piece-work was this, that on the task-work you could be fined.

Did you fine ?—No, very seldom. We tried to fine them for contumacy, but no fine was imposed.

Did you do both the metal and earth-work on the "payment-by-result" system ?—Yes.

Do I understand you to mean that if in future task-work was to be adopted, you will be in favour of it notwithstanding my classification ?—Yes, without any exception.

Would you then propose separate wages for men and women ?—No, I think not. I would give them both the same rates.

In page 19 of your written evidence you propose that if "Sunday wage is abolished, diggers and carriers should all be allowed to earn an extra wage irrespective of the proportion the latter bear to the former;" how is this extra wage to be earned ?—By working quarter day's extra work every day.

I see you are in favour of daily payments. Do you advocate that system ?—Yes.

Are you in favour of the mukkadams making payments ?—No, I would prefer cashiers.

Would it not involve a large amount of trouble ?— Yes, very large, but I would think it is preferable and better.

What pay would you give such cashier ?—R30 or R40 a month.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Did you apply the piece-work system on all your works ?—No. Only on certain work selected by the Deputy Commissioner.

You had never 25 per cent. of inefficient persons on these works ?—Yes, that was the order of the Deputy Commissioner.

You never introduced piece-work and task-work on the same works ?—On the same charge, but working quite separately.

Was there any order to the effect that you are not to admit any one who showed signs of weakness ?—No such order was in force in my districts. The Hospital Assistant had, however, power to refuse admission.

Was everybody admitted ?—Yes, much to my regret; and so the works were overcrowded.

Could you not increase the works ?—No.

You think the numbers on relief were excessive ?—Yes.

Do you think those people who had no right to relief came on relief works ?—Yes, because they had their villages close by, but when the works moved further on they dropped.

Could you tell me what was the condition of the people who came ?—No, I think everybody more or less from the villages came, so long as the works were close to them.

With regard to the second system (*i.e.*, payment-by results), was it tried in any other district ?—Yes, at Balaghat and Raipur. At Bilaspur it was through a mistake.

What effect had these orders. Did they drive away the people ?—I think it was intended to drive away the people. It had the effect of reducing the number on works.

I suppose you hardly approved of the second system as a working system ?—Under a good Sub-divisional Officer it would work. (It would have worked well at Bundara.)

Do you think the men could keep themselves on this wage ?—Yes, it was practically the D wage.

Did the man on D wage improve in his condition ?—Yes.

Do you think the people were able to purchase cheaper grain in the bazar ?—I do not know.

(*President.*)—Did they come to the works in poor condition ?—Yes, very poor.

They improved to ordinary condition afterwards ?—Yes, not exactly ordinary condition, but better than what they were when they first came.

Were they fined below D wage ?—Hardly ever.

What wages did the diggers get ?—D wages, or about one-sixth more than the others.

Was money-dole given ?—Yes.

Had it any effect on kitchens ?—Yes, the numbers at the kitchens went down.

Do you think this reduced the condition of the mothers ?—No.

Did the children receive cash-doles ?—Yes, at first.

What happened to them when the kitchens were closed ?—I don't know.

Did they come to their parents and share their food ?—No, I do not think so.

Had you any military man on duty ?—Yes, three. Two of them were Sub-divisional Officers and one an Inspecting Officer.

All commissioned officers ?—Yes.

Did they do good work ?—Yes, very good work.

Any British non-commissioned officers ?—No.

Mr. E. Penny.

7th Mar. 1898.

Any Native commissioned officers?—Yes, I had one, who did capital work.

Would you like more of this kind?—Yes, any amount; I certainly think they are very useful and do reliable work.

I see from your answer to questions 57, 59 and 90 that you are not in favour of village tanks?—No, they should be undertaken by malguzars; anyhow, I would have them at a distance of 4 or 5 miles.

As regards residence, did only certain classes reside on works?—Yes.

Did you find hutting expensive?—Yes, very.

Were the huts water-tight?—We tried our best to make them so.

Did the people keep fairly good health during the rains?—Yes.

Any cholera?—No, not during the rains.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—Did the 25 per cent. to the contractor come out of the wage of the people?—Oh, no. We fixed the rates; the people were paid B rate for B task, C rate for C task, and the contractor got 25 per cent. over and above these wages. The men got their full wages.

Did you receive any complaint that the contractors changed their returns?—Well, occasionally we heard complaints, but not where we had picked our man.

Did your officer make payments?—The officer-in-charge always made payments.

Had you many complaints?—A good many at first.

How did you get over such complaints?—Well, we changed them. The Executive Engineer generally paid them, and so he always was a check on them.

How many gangs worked under these contractors?—Five or six.

Had they any sub-contractors?—No, never.

How many men were there in these gangs?—300 to 400.

The men on relief works were in very bad health?—Yes.

Had you any aboriginal tribes on your works?—Yes, but they did not care to stay; they preferred not to reside, although they had shelter provided for them.

Under the task-system was any payment made to dependants?—Not always; at first it was, and then it was stopped.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—In answer to questions 114 to 123, you propose that the Hospital Assistant should be entirely under the orders of the Executive Engineer as regards transfer and duties. Don't you think his transfer, duties, etc., are matters more for the control of the Civil Surgeon than of the Executive Engineer?—No, I think once he is posted under the Executive Engineer he should be entirely under the orders of the Engineer. The Engineer is the only officer capable of judging of the Hospital Assistant's abilities and posting him accordingly. I think it is very awkward to have more than one master. Perhaps if the Civil Surgeon did not interfere, things would have gone on smoothly.

The Hospital Assistants were in charge of the kitchens?—Yes, they were his special charge.

You think that is essential?—Yes.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—Under the piece-work system you did not pay them anything extra to provide for a day on which they were unavoidably absent from the works, that is, for circumstances over which they had no control?—Under the piece-work system they were not paid for that day at all.

Would your rate include maintenance for a day on which they were unavoidably absent?—Yes, during the rains we made an allowance of that kind; we were asked to make a liberal allowance in calculating the rates.

(*President.*)—When the payment-by-result system was introduced and the people left the works, did they, as a rule, leave the adjacent works altogether?—No, they tried to get on task-work.

On the task-work they could earn D wage?—Yes, according to the rates they could not earn more than D wage on task-work. The task-work always remained as it was.

RAO BAHADUR BHARGO RAO, Judge, Small Cause Court, Nagpur, called in and examined.

Rao Bahadur Bhargo Rao.

7th March 1898.

I put in a written statement of evidence and written answers to the Commission's questions.

I shall note separately on each subject noted in Secretary to Famine Commission's letter No. 81 of 18th January 1898:—

(*A*).—*Departures from the principles of the Central Provinces Famine Code.*

I.—The abolition of classes A and C.

II.—The introduction of piece-work system instead of task work.

III.—The observing of local market days as holidays instead of Sundays.

These were the only departures I could notice. The abolition of the two classes was, I believe, done everywhere, and this was properly done; we had no labourers properly falling under those classes.

The substitution of the piece-work for the task-work is, I think, advisable and economical. Under the task-work system a man who does not do full work receives something, and this encourages persons who can work to be idle. Under the piece-work system there is a check on idleness at work.

The change of holidays (from Sunday to market day) suits the convenience of workers.

(*B*).—*The degree of success attending measures adopted.*

The measures adopted for the relief of distress were:—

I.—Private relief.

II.—Government poor-house relief.

III.—Relief centres and kitchens.

IV.—Village relief.

V.—Relief works.

VI.—Relief to weavers and others.

In addition to the relief given by private persons to the poor in the shape of food, either cooked or in grain, and clothing, a very large share was occupied by the relief from the Indian Charitable Fund in affording extra comforts to the poor in the shape of clothing; providing for orphans and their education in some cases; relief to the respectable and help given to the agriculturists in starting their work and in supplying them with seed grain. The relief thus afforded has been unprecedented and has done incalculable good.

As regards poor-house relief, I would note with reference to Nagpur poor-house that it was started from funds raised by subscriptions and was managed till the 1st April 1897, when it was taken over by Government. It was started when large crowds of persons who were found returning from the Berars, on finding no employment there, had collected in large numbers in Nagpur. They were going about seeking employment. As the number of these newcomers was very large and it was daily increasing, the Local Administration sanctioned relief works being opened in the city previous to other works being opened elsewhere; the work was mostly earthwork, and the number who attended was very large. Other relief works were then opened, and men fit to work were sent there. Arrangements were also made to send people to their respective districts where works were opened. Those who remained in the poor-house were travellers from the North-West Provinces and other districts in the Central Provinces who were unable to go on works. The poor-house, though managed from funds raised by subscriptions, was in charge of a Government Officer deputed by the Local Administration for the purpose. The rules of the Code as regards residence and discipline were observed. The scale of diet prescribed in the Code was not observed. The inmates were given two meals. In the case of persons residing in Nagpur the rule of residence at the poor-house was not insisted on; they were allowed to go home at night; their admission to the poor-house was by means of tickets.

The Code rations were introduced from 1st April 1897. In order that persons attending the poor-house may not be compelled to break their caste rules, the persons in charge of cooking were of high caste, and I have no reason to consider that people were dissatisfied with the arrangements. Low castes were kept separate from others and Muhammadans were also kept separate.

The rules with regard to village relief, relief centres and kitchens and poor-houses were observed, and they were found working well.

The kinds of relief works opened were: making of new roads, excavation of tanks and breaking of stone and gitti. These were Government works. In addition to these, there were numerous private works in the shape of deepening and improving tanks, making new tanks, making and improving wells, and embanking fields. These were undertaken by landowners from advances received from Government (takavi) under the Land Improvement Act.

The weavers, as a class not accustomed to stone-breaking, found it difficult to earn their livelihood; earthwork they may be able to do after some experience. I noticed instances in which weavers who had gone to relief camps for stone-breaking had their fingers swollen and they had sores and were unable to work. The scheme of giving them relief in their own professional work was introduced in Nagpur, Kamptee and Umrer. The Madras scheme was found to be very elaborate and expensive; the old system in force in Nagpur was improved upon and adopted. Under this system cash advances were made to the middlemen, who were responsible to Government for the same. These middlemen agreed to employ weavers who had no employment owing to distress and who were approved of by the Government officer in charge of relief. The middlemen were to supply materials and cash to the weavers from time to time, the cash thus advanced by the middlemen to weavers to be adjusted against their wages, which were generally one-fourth of the cost of materials used in the manufacture. The Government agreed to purchase cloth manufactured by the weavers through such middlemen at rates slightly in excess of the market rate which would cover the middlemen's profits. The scheme has been found to work well and has been a great boon to the distressed weavers.

In time of distress Government undertook to provide for orphans; it provided relief to old and infirm who were unable to work and who had no one to take care of them; it provided relief works for those who were able to work. It opened poor-houses also. Provision was made for relief of *pardanashin* females. But there was a class of people who were as hard hit as the poorest labourer, but who nevertheless were precluded by their social position from taking advantage of the charitable relief. These are people with small fixed incomes upon which they live a from hand to mouth life even in ordinary times. The high prices which ruled the market during the past year put it out of their power to make two ends meet, and they are known to have suffered most from the time the present distress first made its appearance. To this class of people relief was given, at a comparatively small cost, by opening cheap grain shops, where they could get wholesome food-grains at reasonable rates. At Nagpur a shop of this kind was opened. Arrangements were made for purchasing rice, wheat, juar and dhal at the cheapest markets. The grain was stored in a convenient central place, where the people for whose relief it was stored could readily go to make their purchases. The charitably disposed persons who had subscribed the required funds had agreed that the funds would carry no interest and that they would sell grain cheaper than the market rates. These rates were usually fixed by the Managing Committee and were such as give appreciable relief. The loss caused by the lowering of the rates was guaranteed to be paid from the Charitable Relief Fund. The District Committee prepared a list of persons to whom the advantage of the shop was to be extended. This was done by special Sub-Committees. People whose income distributed over the members of their family gave an incidence below R1-8 a month were given tickets entitling them to buy from the shop a certain quantity of grain per month. This quantity was fixed with reference to the number of the members and their average requirements. The ticket-holder was at liberty to purchase the quantity in the lump or by instalments. The quantity purchased was noted on the ticket, and when the total quantity was issued the ticket was cancelled and a fresh one was issued. As the grain was issued to ticket-holders only, there was no interference with private trade. It served as a check against arbitrary raising of rates by grain-dealers. Similar shops were opened in Kamptee, Jubbulpore, Chanda, Raipur, Balaghat, Seoni, Mandla and Chhindwara. This kind of relief helped many deserving families.

Besides the above, funds were left with officers-in-charge of station-houses for the relief of wanderers. They were to take charge of such persons and to send them to the nearest poor-house or relief work. In addition to these, Government forests were kept open, where necessary, for forest produce for the purpose of food, and the land-holders were induced to make similar concessions.

All the above measures were carried out on the most economic principles, gave adequate relief and prevented avoidable loss of life.

(*C*).—*Advice as to most effective measures in future famines.*

For relief works I strongly recommend the piece-work system. To prevent able-bodied workers working extra hours and making the business a source of income I would fix a maximum; similarly for weak persons there should be a separate rate. For the kinds of relief works I would recommend the excavation of tanks in rice-producing districts and in other places wells for irrigation purposes. These works should be undertaken by land-holders and tenants by means of assistance in the way of takavi advances, and in special cases famine advances on special concessions may be made. Stone-breaking I recommend on important roads and communications. I do not advocate the task-work system as it is expensive. A person not doing the full work earns the minimum wages, and we have to provide for his dependents. In the piece-work system this will not be the case.

Another mode of conducting the relief works is working through middlemen, the latter being allowed a small percentage, and they should undertake to pay the workers on the piece-work system. This will save cost of supervising establishment and cost of hutting and other sanitary arrangements. There may be some difficulty in finding such good middlemen, but in some places they may be found. I advocate special relief to the weavers in their professional work, and am strongly in favour of establishing cheap grain shops. The system of their working has been described above. It is very simple and affords relief to many deserving families.

(*D*).—*Other recommendations.*

It is essential to know when famine is probable and when imminent; it is no use depending on personal knowledge of District Officers and their staff, as there are frequent changes among them. There must, therefore, be permanent periodical record in each district of the following :—

I.—As to natural features of the country and soil.

II.—The minor food-crops grown and the extent of area of those crops.

III.—The economic habits of the inhabitants; the normal extent of migration among them.

IV.—The extent to which the people in normal times subsist on wild products; what products are used, and in what months they are procurable.

V.—What proportion of persons depend entirely on labour for their living. For how long in the year they maintain themselves and family by agricultural labour, and how do they maintain themselves in normal years by other labour in the remaining months.

VI.—Stocks of food and other grain supply.

VII.—What useful private works, such as tanks and wells, could be undertaken with advantage.

These and other similar matters should form the subject of enquiry. The District Land Record staff can collect valuable information, and this can be supplemented by Tahsildars.

I would propose that the preparation of the village register of the poor (section 34, Chapter V) be not postponed till scarcity, in the opinion of the Commissioner, is likely to be great. The preparation of this register may be left to the District Officer, and it should be a permanent record revised periodically.

Answers to Questions.

* 1. The affected area in the Nagpur District was 524 square miles and population 243,000.

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

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32. The land-owning and agricultural classes have not been permanently injured; they will recover their former position after three or four successive good harvests.

57. I consider village tanks very useful as a form of relief work in rice-growing districts. Such works permanently benefit the villages.

70. Programme of famine relief works in each district is maintained, but plans and estimates in all cases were not ready.

71. (*a*) Five miles.

(*b*) Twenty to twenty-five miles.

72. Yes.

114. Small tanks and wells by Civil officers; roads and other large works by officers of the Public Works Department.

118. Officers of the grade of Naib-Tahsildar.

119. Yes.

120. The officer responsible for execution and inspection of work should not have control of payments; the bazar, kitchen and conservancy arrangements may be left with him.

121. In very large camps officers of position may be invested with magisterial powers.

128. (I). No.

(II). Yes.

129. Minimum (1,000) and maximum (5,000).

155. Yes.

156. No.

160. Not to my knowledge.

164. I would propose cooked food at the kitchens being given instead of gratuitous relief at home.

172. It was large at first in the Nagpur poor-house, and then it fell off when men were sent to their districts for work.

173. From low castes, Mahars, Gonds, Pankas, Mangs, Muhammadans, weavers.

174. I did not notice any better castes and persons of respectable position in the poor-house, but I noticed two instances of crippled Government pensioners having a large family and children going to the poor-house, and I am inclined to think that, when hard pressed, they would go to the poor-house.

177. About 70 per cent. persons were residents of districts of the province and 30 per cent. from Native States and the North-West Provinces.

178. I judged that the inmates had suffered from famine and had wandered after leaving home.

179. Measures were systematically adopted to send away people to their homes and to works.

180. Yes.

181. Yes, the rules are explicit.

182. Yes.

183. Yes.

184. No.

205. Cultivators of position should be given advances instead of wages on works.

206. I would give advances to cultivators of position, but not to all indiscriminately.

208. In giving suspension or remission there was a condition imposed on the landholders that the privilege should be extended to tenants.

210. Yes.

212. It should not carry interest.

213. Government has, I think, no power at present; but it should have it.

214. It should be remission.

220. The orphans should be brought up in some profession and then allowed to go, or they should be made over to some society or orphanages.

221. Yes.

222. I have no suggestions to offer.

223. No.

225. Yes.

226. Not necessary.

227. Yes.

228. Cheap grain shops were started in this district, and these did not interfere with private trade.

229. Yes.

230. The help should be given before the commencement of the agricultural season.

231. Ordinary tenants and others who have lost credit and who have nothing left to assist them in starting work.

232. No.

233. Yes; this was done in some instanees.

234. Yes. The tenants have been started in life.

235 and 236. I shall be prepared to answer these in full detail at the time of my oral examination. I hope to receive final accounts by that date.

237. Clothes.

238. Help in the shape of grain and through cheap grain shops, as also clothing.

239. Yes.

240. Yes.

241. I shall present the statement at the time of my oral examination.

242. Police had funds to send these men to the poor-house or works and feed them.

245. They were from North-Western Provinces and surrounding Native States; there being distress in those parts, they came in search of employment; some were on their way to the Berars, where they thought they would find work, but owing to distress in that part they failed, and they returned to this province to obtain any work.

246. No.

247. They should be sent back to their homes.

273. In towns labourers and artizans use rice, *juar* and wheat; in villages, *juar* and wheat; and in districts like Balaghat, Raipur, Bilaspur, Chhindwara *kodo* is used as well as rice.

274. Two meals; each meal consists of bread and vegetables, or rice and *dhal*.

278. Rice and juar and wheat were used in poor-houses.

279. Two meals.

282. The crops had failed, prices were rising; there was not enough grain in the country, and reluctance of some to part with grain for fear that there would be no grain available raised prices all over the country.

284. The grain dealers were active in trade as usual.

285. They could get grain at market rates in large towns and villages, but in villages removed from large towns they had to pay higher rates.

286. Yes.

287. There was not much export.

288. There were no time bargains; people made good profits, but not fortunes.

290. Some did hoard up.

291. Yes.

292. Yes.

298. Wages did not rise for want of work.

304. Kacchis imported Burma rice.

Statement showing area sown with kharif an rabi in the districts of the Central Provinces with the aid from the Charitable Fund.

Districts.	Area (in acres) sown.		
	With kharif.	With rabi.	Total.
Nagpur	11,000	8,522	19,522
Bhandara	17,256	13,118	30,374
Chanda	25,134	8,500	33,634
Wardha	26,138	22,932	49,070
Balaghat	32,000	40,000	72,000
Raipur	65,233	21,630	86,863
Bilaspur	12,500	6,300	18,800
Jabalpur	100,000	30,000	130,000
Saugor	115,444	18,594	134,038
Damoh	81,128	56,666	137,794
Mandla	115,000	10,400	125,400
Seoni	45,454	11,457	56,911
Hoshangabad	55,250	91,298	146,548
Chhindwara	38,000	15,000	53,000
Narsingpur	53,269	49,504	102,773
Betul	35,000	12,000	47,000
Nimar	206,504	68,868	275,372
TOTAL	934,310	484,789	1,419,099

(*President.*)—What was your connection with the famine?—I was in charge of relief works and poor-houses at Nagpur.

When did you first notice signs of distress?—In this district, from the beginning of June.

Did you open grain shops?—Yes, with the object of supplying the people with grain 3 or 4 annas cheaper than what they could get it at in the open market. They were started with the idea of selling grain at cost price, but we had very often to sell it below cost price, and so we suffered loss. The loss was about ₹3,000 a month.

Does this ₹3,000 include gratuitous relief?—No.

Had you many weavers on stone-breaking work?—Not many.

Do you think they should be relieved in their own trade?—They take to stone-breaking easily. We had many families of these weavers, including women and children, who were on stone-breaking work. If possible, I would relieve them in their trade.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—What was the total number of weavers?—I can't say.

Are you in favour of piece-work?—I had no experience of that.

Have you had any experience of task-work?—No.

Did you inspect the works?—Yes, I used to go occasionally.

The people in the poor-houses generally came from other districts; did they not?—Yes, about two-thirds and one-third were immigrants.

Did you make enquiries?—Yes, I did. I found that many of them were on their way to the Berars, where they generally get work during the harvesting season. But this year unfortunately the crops had failed even in the Berars, and so these people sought refuge in the poor-houses.

Is this the direct route for them?—Yes; but I think the want of food stopped them from going from here or returning home; meantime relief works in the shape of earth-works were started.

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7th Mar. 1898.

When was this?—About the 1st of November.

What was their number?—About 800.

Many deaths among them?—No, but they were in a very emaciated condition.

You think the scheme of giving relief to the weavers worked well?—Yes; very satisfactorily.

Did they do good work?—Yes. Before we introduced the scheme we tried it experimentally, and when we found it would work well, we consulted the Local Government. We tried it at Nagpur, Kamptee, and Umrer.

Did weavers from other places also come here for work?—Yes.

What have you done with the cloth?—We have it at present with us, not yet disposed of. We have had the plague scare, and so there was no demand for this cloth either here or at Bombay, and then there were scarcely any marriages on account of the plague and famine.

What quantity of cloth is in hand?—About 30,000 to 35,000 yards. We had purchased in all cloth worth ₹80,000.

Do you think you will be able to dispose of your cloth?—Yes.

Did you admit all weavers to relief?—No.

You say in giving them relief you worked through middlemen?—Yes.

Did they all weave coarse cloth?—Yes. But at Kamptee and Nagpur ordinary cloth was also prepared by them.

What proportion of weavers did you employ?—About 3,000 at Nagpur with their families and 700 in Kamptee.

In answer to Question No. 164 you recommend cooked food at the kitchens instead of gratuitous relief at home?—Yes, so far as my experience of this district goes.

Do you think the kitchen ration sufficient?—Yes, more food is not good for them. The rations are quite sufficient.

Do you think the children's rations sufficient?—Yes, but it should be regulated according to their age; but the average is quite sufficient.

(*Mr Bose.*)—I notice that in answer to Question No. 164 you propose cooked food being given in the kitchens; will there be no caste objections to this?—I have not seen high caste people coming to these kitchens. I never saw a Brahmin.

Did not the Kunbis come: would they not object?—Yes, we had Kunbis; they would not object.

You say as regards the cloth on hand that during the marriage season you would be able to dispose of it; did you dispose of any during December, which is the marriage season with the Hindus?—No, owing to the plague scare we were not able to dispose of any. At the next marriage season we expect to get better prices than we shall if we dispose of it in ordinary times.

Have you seen all the districts in this Province?—Yes.

What were the average wages in the district during the last 10 years?—Well I think 3 annas for a man, 2½ for a woman, and 6 pice for a boy.

The Jubbulpore rates were the same; were they not?—Yes, I think so.

(*Mr. Craddock.*)—Do you think the rates were the same some 17 years ago?—No, I think the rates were cheaper then, and they have been increasing.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—What is the rate in the villages?—Men get 1½ anna, the women 9 pies; they are mostly paid in kind (*i. e.*, grain). One hundred tolas of *jowari* is the usual rate for a man or woman.

At the Judicial Commissioner's Office, Nagpur.

TWENTY-NINTH-DAY.

Tuesday, 8th March 1898.

PRESENT:

SIR J. B. LYALL, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I. (PRESIDENT.)

SURGEON-COLONEL J. RICHARDSON. | MR. T. HIGHAM, C.I.E.

MR. T. W. HOLDERNESS, C.S.I. | RAI BAHADUR B. K. BOSE, C.I.E.

MR. H. J. MCINTOSH, *Secretary*.

Mr. F. W. A. Prideaux.

8th Mar. 1898.

Mr. F. W. A. PRIDEAUX, Officiating Deputy Commissioner, Akola District, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

At the commencement of the famine the works were conducted under the provisions of the Bombay Famine Code. Then women and children were paid at the North-Western Provinces rates, and from May to when the works closed in July men were receiving the wages fixed according to class by the Bombay Famine Code, and women, children, and dependents were paid according to the North-Western Provinces system. On District Board works no Sunday wage was paid, and no adult dependents were supported, non-working children getting one pice each. There were six works so treated.

On six works that started in July and ended in August, the North-Western Provinces Code rates were paid to all labourers and their children. Dependents were not paid on these works.

Five works that were started in February and ended in June were conducted under the Bombay Famine Code, but no hutting was allowed and no dependents and children were paid. Workers on these works resided principally in their own villages; and as other works were open at some distance from these where workers' dependents were paid, these workers could have gone to those works if they wished to leave their villages. Dependents and children were not paid, as workers were residing in their own homes, and it was difficult to ascertain the truth regarding the number of dependents and children really dependent on these workers.

On three works that opened in the beginning of July male labourers were at first paid at the Bombay Famine Code rates for a fortnight; women and children were paid according to the North-Western Provinces Code, and only dependent children receiving relief. After the first fortnight male labourers also came on the North-Western Provinces rates.

The modified system of intermediate relief as laid down in the North-Western Provinces Government Resolution No. 753-S.—73, dated 16th March 1897, was tried on one work, but was not a success. It was only open for one week and then deserted by the labourers, who alleged that they could not maintain themselves on the wage paid.

On one work opened on the 22nd July 1897 labourers were at first paid according to the North-Western Provinces Code. Then the minimum rates under the Bombay Famine Code were paid. This system was introduced on the 25th July and the work closed on the 10th September, no gratuitous relief being paid to dependents or children; but the non-working children were fed at a poorhouse. The work commenced with 1,046 labourers and closed with 422.

The Bombay Famine Code rates appear to me too high. The local committee assembled for the purpose of dealing with the revision of the Bombay Famine Code have recommended that work should commence on the piece-work system.

I give below an extract from the proceedings of the committee:—

* * * * * *

"The piece-work system is to be adopted as far as possible, and the Commissioner in communication with the Superintending Engineer will decide whether work is to be carried on by piece-work or daily labour. Generally relief works will be commenced on piece work, and when distress deepens the piece work will be supplemented by task work on daily wages, with relief for dependents if necessary; as the distress draws to a close, task work on daily wages should be discontinued, and piecework again resorted to."

APPENDIX V-A.

Table of piece-work rates for earth-work per 1,000 c. ft.

I.—Black soil—Digger's task, 90 c. ft.

Current rates of grain per rupee.	Lead in feet with 5 feet lift.												Remarks.
	50		100		150		200		300		400		500		
Pounds.	R	a.	R	a.	R	a.	R	a.	R	a.	R	a.	R	a.	
30	1	15	2	3	2	7	2	13	3	5	3	14	4	7	(1) For each foot of lift beyond 5 feet add 12 feet of lead.
28	2	1	2	7	2	11	3	2	3	12	4	6	5	0	(2) The above rates are framed on the assumption that a "digger's" task is:— Ninety feet per day and his wage is the grain equivalent of 38 ounces; and that a "carrier's" task is 100 cubic feet carried 100 lineal feet, and her wage is the grain equivalent of 26 ounces. To the amount so obtained one-sixth has been added as Sunday wage.
26	2	3	2	11	3	0	3	7	4	2	4	14	5	9	
24	2	6	2	15	3	4	3	12	4	8	5	5	6	2	
22	2	11	3	3	3	8	4	1	4	15	5	12	6	11	*For example*—Grain equivalent 20lbs. per rupee. Lead 50 feet—lift 5 feet. "Digger's" wage 1 anna 11 pies . 23 pies. "Carrier's" " 1 " 4 " . 16 " Reduced lead = $\{36+50+12\times5\}$ feet = 146 ft. "Digger's" cost per 1,000 c. ft. $= \frac{2{,}000\times23}{90}$ pies = 256 "Carrier's" task = $\frac{10{,}000}{36+50+12\times5} = \frac{10{,}000}{146}$ c. ft. = 69 c. ft. Cost per 1,000 c. ft. = $\frac{1{,}000\times16}{69}$ pies = 232 Total . 488 Add one-sixth for Sunday . 81 Total . 569 = R2-15-5 = Say R3 per 1,000
20	3	0	3	8	3	13	4	6	5	5	6	4	7	4	
18	3	6	3	15	4	4	5	0	6	1	7	3	8	5	
16	3	12	4	6	4	12	5	8	6	12	8	1	9	5	
14	4	5	5	0	6	0	6	6	7	12	9	3	10	10	
12	4	14	5	10	6	4	7	3	8	12	10	5	11	14	
10	5	14	6	13	7	8	8	10	10	7	12	5	14	3	

APPENDIX V-A—*continued.*

II.—Soft moorum—Digger's task, 60 c. ft.

Current rates of grain per rupee.	Lead in feet with 5 feet lift.							Remarks.
	50	100	150	200	300	400	500	
Pounds.	₹ a.	₹ a.	₹ a.	₹ a.	₹ a.	₹ a.	₹ a.	
30	2 7	2 12	2 15	3 7	3 15	4 8	5 1	(1) For each foot of lift beyond 5 feet add 12 feet of lead.
28	2 11	3 0	3 4	3 12	4 6	5 0	5 10	
26	3 0	3 5	3 9	4 1	4 13	5 8	6 4	
24	3 4	3 10	3 14	4 7	5 4	6 0	6 13	
22	3 8	3 15	4 3	4 13	5 11	6 8	7 6	
20	3 12	4 4	4 9	5 3	6 2	7 1	8 0	
18	4 4	4 13	4 14	5 14	6 15	8 0	9 1	
16	4 11	5 5	5 2	6 8	7 11	8 14	10 1	
14	5 7	6 3	6 0	7 8	8 14	10 4	11 10	
12	6 2	7 0	7 8	8 8	10 0	11 9	13 2	
10	7 6	8 6	9 1	10 3	12 0	13 14	15 12	

III.—Average moorum—Digger's task, 45 c. ft.

Current rates of grain per rupee.	Lead in feet with 5 feet lift.							Remarks.
	50	100	150	200	300	400	500	
Pounds.	₹ a.	₹ a.	₹ a.	₹ a.	₹ a.	₹ a.	₹ a.	
30	2 14	3 3	3 8	3 13	4 7	5 0	5 9	(1) For each foot of lift beyond 5 feet add 12 feet of lead.
28	3 0	3 5	3 11	4 0	4 11	5 5	6 0	
26	3 2	3 8	3 14	4 4	5 0	5 11	6 7	
24	3 3	3 11	4 1	4 7	5 4	6 1	6 14	
22	3 5	3 13	4 4	4 10	5 9	6 7	7 5	
20	3 7	3 15	4 7	4 14	5 14	6 13	7 12	
18	3 10	4 3	4 12	5 4	6 6	7 7	8 8	
16	3 13	4 7	5 1	5 10	6 14	8 1	9 3	
14	4 1	4 13	5 8	6 3	7 10	9 0	10 5	
12	4 5	5 2	5 15	6 11	8 5	9 14	11 6	
10	4 12	5 12	6 11	7 9	9 7	11 5	13 2	

IV.—Hard moorum.—Digger's task, 30 c. ft.

Current rates of grain per rupee.	Lead in feet with 5 feet lift.							Remarks.
	50	100	150	200	300	400	500	
Pounds.	₹ a.	₹ a.	₹ a.	₹ a.	₹ a.	₹ a.	₹ a.	
30	3 15	4 4	4 7	4 13	5 6	5 15	6 9	(1) For each foot of lift beyond 5 feet add 12 feet of lead.
28	4 5	4 11	4 14	5 5	6 0	6 10	7 5	
26	4 12	5 2	5 6	5 14	6 9	7 5	8 1	
24	5 3	5 9	5 14	6 6	7 3	8 0	8 13	
22	5 10	6 1	6 6	6 15	7 13	8 11	9 9	
20	6 1	6 9	6 15	7 8	8 7	9 6	10 6	
18	6 14	7 7	7 13	8 8	9 9	10 10	11 11	
16	7 10	8 4	8 11	9 7	10 10	11 13	13 0	
14	8 13	9 9	10 0	10 14	12 4	13 10	15 0	
12	10 0	10 13	11 6	12 5	13 14	15 7	17 0	
10	12 1	13 0	13 11	14 14	16 11	18 8	20 6	

Mr. F. W. A. Prideaux.

8th Mar. 1898.

APPENDIX V-A.

Table of piece-work rates for stone metal broken to 1½" gauge per 100 cubic feet.

Hard Basalt Stone.—Class II (Digger's) Task—Quarrying stone equivalent to 12 cubic feet metal.

„ III (Carrier's) „ Breaking to 1½" gauge 3 cubic feet metal.

Current rates of grain per rupee.	Per 100 c. ft.	Remarks.
Pounds.	R a.	(1) The above rates are framed on the assumption that the task for class II ("diggers") is quarrying stone or breaking up boulders into chips equivalent to 12 cubic feet of metal of 1½" gauge per day, and that the grain equivalent of his wage is 38 ounces, and that the task for class III ("carriers") is 3 cubic feet of 1½" gauge metal per day, and the grain equivalent of her wage is 16 ounces. To the amount so obtained one-sixth has been added as Sunday wage.
30	2 13	*For example.*—Grain equivalent 20 lbs. per rupee.
28	3 1	Class II wage 1 anna 11 pies . . . . . 23 pies.
26	3 6	„ III 1 „ 4 „ . . . . . 16 „
24	3 10	„ II cost per 100 cubic feet $=\frac{100\times 23}{12}$ pies = 192 pies.
22	3 15	„ III „ 100 „ $\frac{100\times 16}{3}$ pies = 533 pies.
20	4 7	Total . 725 pies.
18	4 15	Add ⅙th for Sunday wage . . 121 „
16	5 8	Total cost per 100 cubic feet . . 846 „
14	6 4	=R 4 6 6
12	7 3	=Say R 4 7 0
10	8 10	

Under this system no relief is given to dependents or to children.

When the famine increases and the above system is no longer workable, a task system, the Committee considered, should be introduced as below:—

(*a*) When relief works are carried out by daily labour, the relief workers shall be divided into the following classes:—

(*b*) Class I, "special class," will include all workers of special qualifications, of whom a certain number will be required on the works, that cannot be attracted by the wage paid to members of class II. It will include generally only mates in charge of the gangs, good caste men for supplying water to the workers, and especially expert quarrymen. No more men should be entertained in this class than are absolutely necessary for the proper prosecution of the work.

(*c*) Class II, "digger class," will ordinarily comprise all able-bodied male workers who are capable of performing a full digger's task, but more generally all able-bodied men who are required to perform tasks, whether in quantity or kind, which are beyond the capacity of those who will be relegated to class No. III. Thus on road-metalling operations, class II will include men employed in ordinary quarrying operations or on sledging or breaking up the larger blocks of stone from which spawls are supplied to the breakers, and also all those employed on consolidation when heavy rammers are used. Men in class II may occasionally be employed on work usually given to those in class III, *i.e.*, on carrying or on breaking road-metalling, when circumstances render this necessary; as, for instance, in the case of earth-work with a very long lead in which the diggers can excavate more than the carriers can remove, or in the case of road-works when the stones to be broken lie close at hand and require no quarrying or slicing, so that practically all the workers are breakers or carriers. In all such classes, however, a worker in class II should be required to perform a task 50 per cent. in excess of that set for a unit in class III, or he will otherwise be ineligible for the wage of class II. The class II wage and task should however only be allowed in such cases when the worker has been originally admitted into class II and is put on work ordinarily given to class III temporarily or as a matter of convenience. When the work is of such a character that proper employment on work ordinarily given to men of class II cannot be regularly found for all of this class that come to the work, the number actually required for this work would be selected for this class, and the remainder, which should include the weakest workers, being relegated to class III and given class III task and wage.

(*d*) Class III, the "carrier class," will include the majority of the workers, the weaker men and those unable to dig, and almost all women and big children. On earth-work they will be employed as carriers and sometimes on dressing and tidying up. On road-work they will act either as carriers or breakers. Members of this class may sometimes be employed on digging; but in that case they should be given a half-task, *i.e.*, two of them should be counted as a digger unit, and they should receive only the class III wage.

(*e*) This classification of relief workers is obligatory on both large and small works when carried out by daily labour.

The Committee propose the following standard rations and standard basis on which wages should be calculated, gratuitous relief being given to non-working children and dependents :—

Standard rations for adults.

Table of standard rations for adults.

Items.	Class I—Special class.	Higher ration if the work done is 25 per cent. above standard task.		Ordinary ration if the standard task is executed.		Minimum ration for adults and dependents' ration.
		Class II—Digger class.	Class III—Carrier class.	Class II—Digger class.	Class III—Carrier class.	
	Weight allowed in ounces.					
Flour	24	24	20	24	18	14
Other items. Dal	4	4	3	3	2	2
Other items. Salt	½	½	⅜	⅜	¼	¼
Other items. Ghee	1	1	¾	¾	½	½
Other items. Condiments and vegetables	1	1	¾	¾	½	½
Total grain equivalent of ration in ounces	42	42	34	38	27	23

In all cases ghee may be changed to oil if oil be cheaper than ghee.

The standard rations for children.

Items.	Working children, age 7 to 12.	Non-working children, age under 7.
	Weight allowed in ounces.	
Flour	12	6
Other items. Dal	1	1
Other items. Salt	5/16	⅛
Other items. Ghee	¾	¼
Other items. Condiments and vegetables.	¾	¼
Total grain equivalent and rations in ounces.	18	10

Standard basis for calculating wages.

Table giving the grain equivalents in ounces, the money value of which will be the daily wage of the different classes.

Number of class.	Grain equivalents in ounces.
Class No. I.—Special class	42
Higher wage.	
Class No. II.—Digger class	42
Class No. III—Carrier class	34
Ordinary wage.	
Class No. II.—Digger class	38
Class No. III.—Carrier class	27
Minimum wage for all classes and dependents' wage.	23
Children from 7 to 12	18
Children below 7	10

APPENDIX III.

Table of standard daily tasks for relief workers.

For earth-work and road-metal.

1—Tasks for Class II—the Digger Class.

Daily task for excavation only for all leads and lifts.

Description of soil.	Standard task which will entitle a digger class II to the ordinary wage.	Extra task which will entitle a digger class II to the higher wage.	Remarks.
	Cubic feet.	Cubic feet.	
Black or red soil	90	112	The task for a person in class III (the carrier class) will be half the task of class II (the digger class).
Soft moorum	60	75	
Average moorum	45	56	
Hard moorum	30	37	
Daily task for quarrying stone for road metal.			
Hard basalt stone	12	15	Ditto ditto.

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APPENDIX III.—*continued.*

II.—Tasks for Class III—the Carrier Class.

Daily task for carriage only for different leads and lifts.

Lead in feet.	Lift in feet.	Task for carrier unit. For ordinary wage.	Task for carrier unit. For higher wage.	Lift in feet.	Task per carrier unit. For ordinary wage.	Task per carrier unit. For higher wage.	Lift in feet.	Task per carrier unit. For ordinary wage.	Task per carrier unit. For higher wage.	Remarks.
		c. ft.	c. ft.		c. ft.	c. ft.		c. ft.	c. ft.	
50	5	69	86	10	49	61	15	38	48	Note (*a*).—The task of class II, digger class, when employed as carrier, class III, will be 50 per cent. in excess of task of carrier, *i.e.*, each man of digger class will be counted as 1½ "carrier" unit.
100	...	51	64	...	39	49	...	31	39	
200	...	34	42	...	28	35	...	24	30	Note (*b*).—Each child between 7 and 12 will be counted as half a carrier unit.
300	...	25	31	...	22	28	...	19	24	
400	...	20	25	...	18	22	...	16	20	
500	...	17	21	...	15	19	...	14	17	
50	20	31	39	25	26	33	30	22	28	
100	...	27	34	...	23	29	...	20	25	
200	...	21	26	...	19	24	...	17	21	
300	...	17	21	...	16	20	...	14	17	
400	...	15	19	...	13	17	...	13	17	
500	...	13	16	...	12	15	...	11	14	

One foot lift is equivalent to 12 feet lead.

Letter H=Horizontal lead in feet.

V=Vertical lift in feet.

R=Reduced lead in feet.

$R=36+H+12y$. 36 feet being equivalent to the initial effort, a carrier unit must carry 100 cubic feet to a distance of 100 feet per diem to earn the ordinary wage, and must carry 125 cubic feet to a distance of 100 feet per diem to earn the higher wage.

Daily task per carrier unit $\frac{10\,000}{36+H+12y}$ for ordinary wage; or $\frac{12,500}{36+H+12y}$ for higher wage.

T=Total daily digger's task for the sub-gang in cubic feet.

Number of carriers required for the sub-gang—

1st—To earn the ordinary wage—$\frac{T \times R}{10,000}$

2nd—To earn the higher wage—$\frac{T \times R}{12,500}$

II.—Combined tasks for Class III—the Carrier Class—*continued.*

Kind of metal.	Breaking road metal. Class II—daily task for higher wage.	Class II—daily task for ordinary wage.	Class III—daily task for higher wage.	Class III—daily task for ordinary wage.	Task for children.	Remarks.
	c. ft.	c. ft.	c. ft.	c. ft.	c. ft.	
Hard basalt broken to 1½" gauge	6½	5	3¾	3	1½	

Note.—The tasks laid down in Appendix III are intended as a guide in fixing the standard tasks, and when necessary may be modified by the Executive Engineer, who should however report to the Superintending Engineer when any modification of these tasks is found necessary.

APPENDIX No. V.—*Table of daily wages of relief workers.*

Mr. F. W. A. Prideaux.

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Current rates of grain per rupee.		Class I, special class.	Higher wage due when standard task is exceeded by 25 per cent.		Ordinary wage due when standard task is executed.		Minimum wage for all classes, dependents' dole.	Working children from 7 to 12.	Non-working children below 7.
			Class II, diggers.	Class III, carriers.	Class II, diggers.	Class III, carriers.			
		Grain equivalent of wage in ounces.							
Pounds.	Ounces.	42	42	34	38	27	23	18	10
		Daily wages.							
		a. p.	a. p.	a. p.	a. p.	a. p.	a. p.	a. p.	a. p.
30	...	1 3	1 3	1 0	1 3	0 9	0 9	0 6	0 3
28	...	1 6	1 6	1 3	1 3	1 0	0 9	0 6	0 3
26	...	1 6	1 6	1 3	1 6	1 0	0 9	0 6	0 6
24	...	1 9	1 9	1 6	1 6	1 3	0 9	0 9	0 6
22	...	2 0	2 0	1 6	1 9	1 3	1 0	0 9	0 6
20	...	2 0	2 0	1 9	2 0	1 3	1 0	0 9	0 6
18	...	2 3	2 3	2 0	2 0	1 6	1 3	1 0	0 6
17	...	2 6	2 6	2 0	2 3	1 6	1 3	1 0	0 6
16	...	2 9	2 9	2 3	2 3	1 9	1 3	1 0	0 9
15	...	2 9	2 9	2 3	2 6	1 9	1 6	1 0	0 9
14	...	3 0	3 0	2 6	2 9	1 9	1 6	1 0	0 9
13	...	3 3	3 3	2 6	3 0	2 0	1 9	1 3	0 9
12	...	3 6	3 6	2 9	3 3	2 3	1 9	1 3	0 9
11	...	3 9	3 9	3 0	3 6	2 3	2 0	1 6	1 0
10	8	4 0	4 0	3 0	3 6	2 6	2 0	1 6	1 0
10	...	4 3	4 3	3 3	3 9	2 6	2 3	1 6	1 0
9	8	4 6	4 6	3 6	4 0	2 9	2 3	1 9	1 0
9	...	4 9	4 9	3 9	4 3	3 0	2 6	1 9	1 0

NOTE.—The daily wages in annas for any rate of grain can be found per dividing the grain equivalent of wages in ounces by the number which represents the current rate of grain in pounds by rupee.

No Sunday wage is to be paid except to dependents and children working and non-working.

The systems tried appear to have been a success, as no deaths occurred on the works except from epidemic disease. The introduction of the North-Western Provinces rates resulted in a saving, the rates being lower than those under the Bombay Famine Code.

In Berar I consider that advances under the Land Improvement Act granted for the improvement of land are of great value in keeping agricultural labourers in their villages; it is being specified that the work has to be executed within the period of distress. A remission, say up to 25 per cent. of the amount advanced, if the loan has been properly employed in giving work to labourers, would make these loans more popular and keep in their villages many who would otherwise flock to our works. In my opinion the value of such loans cannot be overrated.

(*President.*)—You were in charge of the Akola District throughout the famine?—Yes.

When did you notice the rise in prices?—At the end of September 1896.

What was it due to?—Export trade with Central India, Khandesh, and other places.

Have you any figures?—No. The road-borne traffic was mostly with the Nizam's Territory.

Was there any order from the Nizam's Government stopping the import or export trade with that territory?—No, not that I am aware of.

How did the distress show itself?—By high prices of grain, which ended in one or two riots.

What work did you open?—In December we opened test works, and in February small village works. Mostly clearing cactus from village sites and improving village sites under the supervision of the District Board.

What system did you adopt?—The Bombay Famine Code was adopted.

You think the works were opened early?—Yes.

Did the agricultural labourer and the land-holder come to the relief works?—We had a number of agricultural labourers and a few petty land-holders.

Would you distinguish the agricultural labourer from the farm servant?—Yes, a labourer is a temporary servant, while a farm servant is engaged all the year round.

What does the farm servant get?—Rupees 15 to R20 a year, with food all the year round.

In kind?—No, usually in cash, besides he is fed; in the poorer part of the district it is generally less.

How is the agricultural labourer paid?—In cash and grain and during the harvest generally in grain.

What is the rate?—Three to 4 annas a day for a labourer.

Did the wages change when the scarcity commenced?—Yes, they fell to 2 annas to 1½ for a man and 1 anna for a woman. There was very little work for them, digging grass and tree-roots.

You had a good harvest in your district?—Yes. Except *rabi*; the wheat crop was not good; the *kharif* was excellent.

When did the prices go up?—In September. The highest price of *jowari* was 15 lbs. The usual rate being 56 to 60 lbs. per rupee. In ordinary years the rate was 70 lbs.

Now the district is in normal condition?—Yes.

A good deal of labour in your district comes from outside?—Yes.

Did it come this year?—Not as much as in other years. There was a general complaint about labour.

In your written evidence you say, "The Bombay Famine Code rates appear to me too high." What is the idea?—We first paid the Bombay rates and then introduced North-West Provinces rates. They were able to support themselves on the North-Western Provinces rates.

Did you support their dependents?—On the District Fund works we did not. Most of the people came from villages close by. The children, however, received aid from the Gratuitous Relief Fund. No hutting was allowed, and the people returned home every evening.

Did you have any gratuitous relief?—Yes (under Chapter 5 of the Code.)

When did it begin?—In June or the beginning of July, I am not certain of the date.

All over the district or only in certain parts?—All over the district; there were a great many on gratuitous relief.

Mr. F. W. A. Prideaux.

8th Mar. 1898.

This relief was confined to the four classes mentioned in Chapter 5 of the Code. We had nearly 1,800 people on gratuitous relief.

(*Mr. Holdernèss.*)—You had poor-houses in the district?—Yes, some 7 or 8; (*Note.*—There were no poor-houses after 15th October 1897.)

Was the population considerable?—Yes, I think so. I have figures.

Where did they come from?—A good many from the district, and a good many from the Berars and the Central Provinces.

Those from the Berars came in search of work?—They came after the famine had appeared.

In what month?—I think they began coming in January, and went back at the end of the famine.

Did they come in a bad state?—Yes, they were weak and in an unusually poor condition.

Did you turn them out of the poor-houses when they were strong enough to work?—Yes.

Was the mortality great?—Yes; 140 deaths in poor-houses.

And in the district?—In August 11·2, September 10·0.

What was the cause?—The mortality was mostly due to the poor condition of the people, owing to damp, and green food.

Any cholera?—In August there were 1,574 deaths and in September 341. The death-rate rose considerably on account of cholera.

Did you report many cases of death from starvation?—Nine in all.

Were they cases in which the people died of actual starvation, want of food?—Yes, mostly they died for want of food; they were wanderers.

Had you any famine programme?—No; we had to make the best of what material we had at hand.

Who were the classes of people who were chiefly relieved?—Dheds, Mahars and other low castes.

You say you paid the people at first according to Bombay Famine Code rates; why did you adopt the Bombay Code?—It was made applicable only for men, but the women and children were treated under the North-Western Provinces Code, under the orders of the Commissioner.

You gave them the minimum rates when you put them under the North-Western Provinces Code?—They were paid 13 chattaks of grain for an adult female, which is equivalent to the D wage. All the women were paid according to this rate. Non-working children were paid 1 pice each, but the working children were paid according to the North-Western Provinces Code.

Did you give Sunday wages on the five works started in February and the other three works opened in July in which the Bombay Code rates were paid?—Yes, except on the work started on the 22nd of July, which was carried on by the Public Works Department.

You give an account of the proposals of the Committee don't you think that under it men and women will to a very great extent get the same wages, without difference?—Yes.

That follows Mr. Higham's proposal?—Yes.

Do you think the rates proposed by the Committee sufficient?—Yes.

Even for people in good working condition?—Yes.

The people went home every evening and so you cannot say what resources they had?—Well, I think they had next to nothing.

Was there serious loss of cattle?—Yes.

Did you get any gifts from the Indian Charitable Fund?—Yes.

(*President.*)—Did not the people live on the flesh of the dead cattle?—Yes, the low castes did live on it.

They supplemented wages by that means?—Yes.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Do people keep large stocks of grain?—Yes. In 1896 I had a statement made and found that they generally had several months' supply in stock. An ordinary resident had a year's supply.

The cultivator who held his stock refused to sell it?—Yes.

The small cultivator had hard times?—Yes.

Did you give them advances?—Yes, for the improvement of fields, some R27,000.

Was that sufficient?—I had applications for R72,000, but had not the money to meet the demand.

Are the advances profitable?—Yes.

Did they spend a certain percentage on themselves?—Yes, but the major part was spent in improving land, fields, etc. Every field was cleared of all bushes, rubbish, etc.

Did the land-holders take advantage of the prevailing low rates to employ labour?—Yes.

Did the Committee who fixed the "standard rations for adults, etc.," given in your written evidence, compare it with the jail rates?—The Civil Surgeon was a member of the Committee and the rates were fixed by him. As far as I remember he was of opinion that except the special class A, and the digger class II, the others were below jail rates. In all cases the minimum ration was fixed. The dependants' ration seems to have been the same as the Bombay minimum ration for women with a slight difference in salt and ghee.

How is the grain equivalent of 23oz. arrived at in the table?—I do not know, it was worked by the Executive Engineer.

Can you tell me how the total grain equivalent of ration in ounces, given in that table, worked out?—I do not know, the Executive Engineer worked it out. Mr. Swinnerton will be able to explain these figures.

How often did you change your rates?—Once a week according to the rate of *jowari* prevailing before payment.

(*President.*)—On what grain was the ration calculated?—*Jowari* second sort.

You say in your written evidence no Sunday wage is to be paid to dependants, children working and non-working, why?—Their ordinary week-day payments are calculated at a high rate, 25 per cent. more than maximum, to cover the Sunday-wage, and so with a little extra work or hard work they earn the Sunday-wage. The working children and non-working children are also benefitted under this calculation.

I think you would give them the Sunday-wage and also a little more as an incentive to work?—Yes, but that was not tried.

Were Sunday-wages paid on District Local Board works?—No.

To dependants?—No. Only non-working children got one pice each.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—What was the condition of the people on test-works?—In March and April their condition was bad.

Was there anything in their condition to show that there would be heavy mortality among them?—No, the heavy mortality may be due to green-food and their eating all kinds of roots.

Was mortality from cholera and dysentery heavy?—Yes, it was highest in August, when we had 1,790 cases from diarrhœa and dysentery, and 1,574 from cholera, total mortality from all causes 6,509; this heavy death-rate was due to green, unsuitable, and insufficient food.

Is not August the unhealthiest part of the year?—Yes.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—When did you notice people coming into your district?—September 1896.

Do not people come in search of work generally at harvest time?—I can't say; I think they do, but more came in January and February.

MR. R. A. W. SWINNERTON, Executive Engineer, West Berar Division, called in and examined.

Mr. R. A. W Swinnerton

8th Mar. 1898.

I put in written answers to the Commission's questions.

*52. In the case of unmetalled roads, about 600 day units per mile, assuming that a mile of 1½-foot bank can be completed in two months—diggers doing 90 cubic feet and carriers 70 cubic feet per day.

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

In the case of metalled road, about (600 + 1,000 + 500) 2,100 day units per mile, assuming the earth-work as above, and that metal for a 6″ coat 12″ wide can be manufactured in three months, and that a 3″ coat is renewed every five years. The consolidation can only be done by bullock power or steam power.

53. Yes.

54. No.

55. The collection of stone metal is a most excellent method of employing relief labour, and probably the most satisfactory one.

56. No.

57. (i) Of great value, as it retains the people in the villages. Such work should, if possible, be carried out by the Civil Department through the agency of its village and other officials.

(ii) Of no great value in Berar.

60. The number of possible village tanks has been practically exhausted.

63. No prospect of any impounding reservoir being advantageously constructed.

70. No plans and estimates were ready prepared when the distress appeared, as it was the opinion of the Commissioner (Colonel Mackenzie) that Berar would never suffer from famine.

71. (*a*) About a mile and a half.

(*b*) About 25 miles.

72. No.

73. Yes.

74. Residence on the works has been the rule.

75. Residence on the works was not made a definite condition of relief.

76. Am not in favour of making residence obligatory.

No.

Yes.

78. The establishment under such conditions would be insufficient.

79. No.

80. About 8 annas per worker.

81. }
82. } No.
83. }

84. Practically all employed on task-work. But the "intermediate system" was adopted in these instances, and the special reports connected with them are attached.

85. Yes.

87. The objections taken by the Famine Commissioners are overstated. Besides which they are less important than those which may be used against task-work.

88. The rate should be increased at first so as to enable the workers to earn the minimum wage, and gradually reduced to the ordinary one as the workers improved in efficiency, which would probably be in a month after starting work.

89. Yes.

	Class I.	Class II.	Class III.
	oz.	oz.	oz.
The ordinary wages would be	42	38	27
Maximum do. do.	42	42	34

90. Each gang to consist of 25 persons, diggers and carriers included in the case of earth-work or of quarrymen and breakers in the case of road metal manufacture.

91. Payment to be made to the headman of the above gang, who would distribute the amount to the several workers.

The amount will be fairly distributed, more particularly as the headman will be chosen by the units forming the gang.

92. The whole of those employed as time-keepers, mukadams, and such like, would not be necessary.

93. No.

94 and 95. The work people should be classified as—

	oz.
Class I, or those with special qualifications, such as gangmates, quarrymen, mates, etc., whose wage will be . .	42
Class II or "diggers," whose ordinary wage will be	38
Class III or "carriers," which will consist of weakly men, all women, and all children above 12 years of age, whose ordinary wage will be	27
Minimum wage for adults of both sexes . .	23
Nursing mothers and women in an advanced state of pregnancy to be employed and tasked as class III, but to have a wage of	42

96. No.

96A. No.

97. Children above 12 years of age as class III.

Children below 12 years (and over 7 years of age) as working children on wage of	18

98. Seven years.

99. Fines, the wage to be paid being ultimately reduced to the actual value of work done independent of any minimum in the case of contumacious individuals.

100. No.

101. No, because after a very brief period they have been able to perform the tasks demanded of them.

102. Yes, but only in classes II and III. The maximum wage shown in replying 89 to be paid when 25 per cent. additional work is done. But no increase beyond this.

103. No.

104. Yes. The task of 10,000 units proposed is what the case demands.

105. Yes.

106. Yes.

107. Yes.

108. Fifty.

114. *By Civil Officers.*—All small works, all village works, all District Board works, and generally all other requiring no professional knowledge.

By Public Works Officers.—All large works and all such as demand professional knowledge during execution.

115. The Commissioner should have the chief executive control of, and be responsible for, the direction of the entire relief works, transmitting all his orders to the Superintending Engineer.

The Deputy Commissioner should have the chief executive control of, and be responsible for, the direction of the relief works in his district, but dealing alone with the Divisional Officer (usually Executive Engineer) in charge of the same relief operations.

116. The Executive Engineer will be entrusted with the immediate direction of the famine relief works, and will thus be responsible for enforcing discipline and directing the labour. He will also be responsible for having entire control of all professional and technical matters, such as nature of work, fines for insufficient outturn, and so forth.

The Deputy Commissioner will in all other matters be the responsible head and director of famine operations within his own district.

117. No.

118. Assistant Commissioners, Extra-Assistant Commissioners, Tehsildars, and Naib-Tehsildars according to the importance of the relief work.

119. Yes.

120. No.

124. { Task-work—twice a week.
Piece-work—once a week.

125. No, but to the nearest pie.

126. By independent cashiers.

127. A pass has been necessary, and the practice is desirable.

Report on the working of the "Intermediate" system of Relief Operations in the West Berar Division during 1897.

Orders for the adoption of this system in connection with the preparation of broken stone metal were issued by the Superintending Engineer in his letter No. 2369 C.W. of the 14th May 1897 and by the Public Works Secretary in his

Mr. R. A. W. Swinnerton.

8th Mar., 1898.

letter No. 119 C.W., dated 22nd idem, and by Superintending Engineer in letter No. 2486 C.W., dated 25th idem; and in connection with other descriptions of famine relief work in Public Works Secretary's letter No. 119 C.W., dated 22nd May 1897.

A.—Preparation of broken stone road metal.

2. No rates being fixed for the labour on broken stone metal by the Superintending Engineer, the following ones were framed for guidance in the division, and all officers in charge of such works were informed in my letter No. 2522, dated 22nd May, that—

"The rate to be paid for breaking stone should be R3-2-0 per 100 c. ft., which is arrived at by assuming that all the labourers are B class women, and that the rate for food-grain 18 lbs. per rupee. If the labourers are A class, the corresponding rate will be R2-10-0 per 100 c. ft."

But even before the issue of this letter, on seeing that the working rate was excessive during the month of March 1897,* from the end of which month only my responsibility began, I directed the officers concerned to pay the labour at the rate of R4-8-0 per 100 c. ft., including all incidental charges for supervision, water-supply, hutting, and such like, being extras.

* From R12-8-0 to R7-8-0 in the Akola district, and R10-12-10 in the Buldana district.

3. The result of all these orders was, notwithstanding that about half the material had been prepared by the beginning of April, that by the time that operations ceased the working rates for the entire outturn were reduced by about 40 per cent. The people objected very seriously to being thus dealt with, and struck for varying periods in the several localities when the innovations were introduced, but eventually were compelled by stress of circumstances to accept the terms. The tasks allotted were fully performed once it was realized that this was the only method of earning full wage.

From R7-15 to R5-12-0 in the Akola district and R7-12-11 in the Buldana district.

B.—Earth-work.

The intermediate system was adopted on—

(*a*) constructing Arsool-Telhara road (in part only);
(*b*) „ Telhara-Jhiri road;
(*c*) „ Ring Bund below Shegaon tank

only, a variety of circumstances, particularly the late receipt of the orders, which did not reach this office until the last week of May, preventing it being followed on the other works.

2. The rate fixed for ordinary tasks on ordinary soil, 3½ annas per 100 c. ft. or R2-3-0 per 1,000 c. ft., is far too low for this locality, and has the further drawback of not varying as it should with the price of food-grains. With the high rates (*i.e.*, from 14lbs. to 18lbs. per rupee) for food-grains which were ruling from April onwards, the wage earned was inadequate to support existence. At 16lbs. of jawari per rupee, 3 annas 6 pies, which is the rate paid per 100 c. ft., the excavation of which will occupy a digger and two carriers (equivalent to a man and two women) the whole day, will only purchase 3¾lbs., a quantity quite insufficient for a family seeing that no gratuitous relief is given. According to Bombay Famine Code, which it is understood applies to this province, the minimum wage rate, the earnings of this same unit would be 5 annas 1 pie, which would procure 5lbs. of jawari. This would bring the earth-work to R3-3-0 per 1,000 c. ft., which is rather less than the ordinary rate for earth-work executed in ordinary years. This rate was eventually adopted on the three works enumerated in the first paragraph.

3. The results were in all cases decidedly satisfactory. In the case of the Arsool-Telhara road, where the earth-work was more than nine-tenths finished before the orders were received, the working rate at the end of March of R9-11-1 was reduced by the end of June to R8-8-1 per 1,000 c. ft. On the Telhara-Jhiri road, which is a continuation of the former road, both alignments running over exactly the same description of soil, and which was executed after rain had fallen to a slight extent, and on which practically no outlay was incurred on hutting owing to the old materials being utilized and to some of the labourers preferring to live in villages and walking to work every fair day, the working rate was R2-14-8 per 1,000 c. ft., or almost exactly one-third that on the Arsool-Telhara road. But here the progress was not satisfactory owing to wage being too low. In the construction of the Ring Bund below the Shegaon tank, which has been only partially done, the final working rate was R6-5-8 (against an estimated one of R12) per 1,000 c. ft.

Report of the working of the "Intermediate" System of Famine Relief Operations in the West Berar Division during 1897 on the lines of Mr. Palmer's Memo. of the 17th June 1897.

The "Intermediate system" was introduced in connection with the preparation of stone road metal under the Superintending Engineer's letters Nos. 2569-C.W. and 2486-C.W. of the 14th and 19th May 1897, respectively, and the Public Works Secretary's letter No. 119-C.W. of the 22nd idem, when practically such class of work was almost completed. But a further difficulty lies in the fact that the "Code system," owing to the excessive costliness of the labour when so employed, was put a stop to at the end of March, after which no "dependents" were paid by this department, and one measured by outturn (at the rate of R4-8-0 per 100 cubic feet) instituted. Then, when the "Intermediate system" was adopted at the beginning of June, the practical result was to reduce the rate for the manufactured material from R4-8-0 to R3-2-0 per 100 cubic feet. It is thus not possible to make such comparisons as are required between "Code" and "Intermediate systems." Then, as the rate for food-grains varied from week to week, the rate of wage under the "Code" system varied. But as the rate under the "Intermediate" system was obtained by adopting 18lbs. per rupee as the price of food-grains, such is employed below.

Code works.

With grain at 20lbs. per rupee, 534 workers earned R68 (khirkee week ending 20th February 1897).
∴ Each worker got 24·45 per day.
∴ At 18lbs. per rupee the wage would be (24·45 × 18/20 pies) = 22·52 pies.

One worker's wage at 22·52 pies = 27·16 pies.

Intermediate works.

One worker's wage (at 33·4 cubic feet per day per B class woman) = 22·5 pies.

It is thus evident that the average "Intermediate" wage fell below that under the "Code" system and that no dependents were paid in any case not affecting the question. There is no doubt, however, that under the Code system as at first worked, where the wage paid depended upon the classification of worker and no proper outturn was insisted on, the cost of work was excessive, being never less than twice what it ought to have been, and in some instances even more. Had the Code system been in operation much longer, it would have rendered the people unfit for hard work again, and would have been pecuniarily disastrous to the Government.

The intermediate system was introduced in connection with earth-work upon receipt of Public Works Secretary's letter No. 119-C.W. of 22nd May 1897. For a variety of reasons it was not possible to introduce it on works which were in progress under Code system, but it was adopted on two new works—(1) the Telhara-Jhiri road, and (2) the Ring Bund below the Shegaon tank. It is not possible to give all the comparisons asked for, and particularly it affords no information as to decrease in numbers, since there was no change from one system to another. But it had the beneficial effect of only attracting those who were really needy, and who were prepared to work for their wages. This was apparent from the great difficulty experienced in getting people to come to these works, though they were situated in populous localities, where the famine was said to be most grievous in its intensity.

It is, however, to be noted that the rate fixed for ordinary tasks in ordinary soil, 3½ annas per 100 cubic feet or R2-3-0 per 1,000 cubic feet, being far too low for this locality and being independent of the rate for food-grains, a new one had to be arrived at for the conditions ruling locally. This is 5 annas 1 pie per 100 cubic feet, or R3-3-0 per 1,000 cubic feet, and gives the minimum wage of the Bombay Famine Code where jawari is at 18 lbs. per rupee. (This has been more fully discussed in the first report.)

Code works.

One worker's wage 23·55 pies = 23·55 pies.

Intermediate works.

One worker's wage at 5 annas 1 pie per 100 cubic feet or 3 workers = 20·33 pies.

(*President.*)—What was your Division?—I was in charge of the West Berar Division, consisting of the Akola and Buldana districts.

Can you explain to us how the grain equivalents given in the table of Mr. Prideaux's statement were arrived at?—I do not know. The Civil Surgeon gave the equivalent.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—What works had you in pregress?—We had some road and tank works and a diversion cut. We employed about 3,000 on these works.

How many relief camps had you?—One relief camp to each work.

On ten works ten different camps?—Yes.

What was the average number of men on the largest work?—3,500 to 5,000.

Who was in charge?—Lieutenant Farquharson, Assistant Engineer.

Had you any Civil Officer?—We had an Extra-Assistant Commissioner in charge for a part of the time, and the Naib Tehsildar.

Was any Civil Officer supposed to be in charge?—They could not spare Civil Officers. We had also Captain Ivers at first.

These officers were in addition to the Public Works Department Officers you had?—Yes.

What class of men?—At first Captain Ivers, then the Extra-Assistant Commissioner, and later on a Naib Tehsildar.

Did you open any kitchens?—The Public Works Department had no kitchens.

Did you pay the dependents anything?—Yes. They were first paid by the Civil Department and we refunded the money by book-transfer,

What was the Civil Officer doing on the works?—He classified and saw that there was no corrupt practices going on. He had in fact very little to do.

That classification could have been done by the Public Works Department?—Yes, much better; it was found that the Public Works Department had to alter that classification. The classification was apparently according to the Bombay Code. They mostly classified them under A, with the object that they should get maximum wages.

You introduced the North-Western Provinces system of classifying workers?—Yes, only on one work—tank-work—for a month towards end of May, but this was Local Fund work and not Public Works Department.

How was the Public Works Department classification made?—Practically according to the outturn of work.

Did you "fine" according to work done in all cases?—Yes.

How did you arrange to measure the work turned out?—From payment to payment; the work done was measured and the gangs paid accordingly.

If half the task was done?—They only got half the payment, and so they soon learnt to complete their task.

Did you work the intermediate system?—On the two largest works we did not introduce it, being afraid it would not answer as we had to work against time to complete them, as if left unfinished they would have disappeared during the monsoons, but it was partially tried on a small scale on two or three works.

Is there any difference between the systems?—Great difference in rates.

You say you were afraid to introduce it?—Yes, from the peculiar difficulties of the cases as explained above, but when I introduced it later on on smaller works I had the North-Western Provinces rates with the Bombay minimum.

You reduced the rates on earth-works from 3 to 2?—Yes.

Under this system it did not pay the workman to stay?—No.

Did you pay them daily wages?—We paid according to work done.

They did not do that in the North-Western Provinces?—That system would not work.

They pay wages daily?—Yes, but we paid twice a week, once for three and the next time four days' wages. We could carry out the payments very correctly by our system.

Had you any trouble in paying them according to the intermediate system?—It had no fair trial. When the system was introduced in June, we were persuading the people to return to their homes.

You were paying them the same rate as in the task-system?—Yes.

Referring to paragraph 3 of your report on the "Intermediate" system, you speak of the working rates being reduced by 40 per cent. owing to your orders to pay them at reduced rates. Do you think there were any other causes also which contributed to this?—Well, the season of the year may also have a good deal to do with it; great part of this work was done in the rains; people could do more than what they were told to do.

When you paid according to task-work, did you fine them "below limit"?—If it looked as if they could not do more we were lenient.

If you do not fine on task-work, will not piece-work be 40 per cent. cheaper?—I was comparing the outturn for task-work; R7·15 was paid in March when they were not fined.

You say in answer to question No. 101, that they always did the task demanded of them, I understand you classed all carriers as D?—That was only on one work—the Iranda tank.

Did you class them according to grade?—No, they were not classed.

Did you adopt the North-Western Provinces system on the Iranda tank-work?—Yes; generally speaking our labourer after three weeks got a trifle more than *D* wage.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—I understood you to say the North-Western Provinces system would not work?—That was with reference to the "Intermediate" system.

Side by side with the Public Works Department the District Funds had their works. What rates did they pay?—I do not know anything about them. Apparently they paid higher rates. Judging from the outturn their result was not as economical as ours, that is to say, comparing our finals with their finals.

When you began to pay by "payments by result" system, what sort of people did you get?—Precisely the same, but the proportion of women and children was larger, chiefly owing to men remaining in the villages.

Did they work?—I cannot say. We had more women, I should say, than children, but they were entirely engaged in stone-breaking operation.

Had you any kitchen?—No, the Public Works Department had nothing to do with kitchens; the Civil Department managed them.

Any gratuitous relief?—We gave no gratuitous relief at first, but afterwards it was decided to refund to the Civil Department all such expenditure incurred by them.

Did you give anything to the children?—One pice to every non-working child.

And to the non-working adult dependents?—They got the minimum wage.

You say the intermediate system failed to attract people?—Well, when these works were started hardly any one came. These were new works, not works which had had people working.

They did not attract people?—No, they did not. My own opinion is that labour was not available at this time.

Why do you suppose the North-Western Provinces rates were much too low for the Berars?—Ordinary rates were some R1-14 to R2.

Were they professional workers?—No, they had to be trained. They were not accustomed to work.

Have you worked in the North-Western Provinces?—No.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—You say you gave the children one pice. Was that in lieu of food?—No, the pice went to add to the parents' earning.

Don't you think they require something more than a pice?—We were entirely guided by the advice of medical officers, the parents arrange to feed the children.

Mr. J. M. Vacha.

8th Mar. 1898.

MR. J. M. VACHA, Assistant Engineer, Public Works Department, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

STATEMENT OF Mr. J. M. VACHA, ASSISTANT ENGINEER, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Opportunities of gaining experience of the famine relief operations.

Assistant Engineer was engaged in the months of January and February 1897 in preparing projects for famine relief works and making all preliminary arrangements as regards tools, hutting, etc., for the West Berar Division under orders of the Executive Engineer, Akola. Early in March he took over charge of the Buldana Sub-Division, West Berar. Here projects were prepared for roads and village tanks, which works were executed during the famine by the Civil Department. The work of constructing 22 miles of "kutcha" Dhad Pragava road carried on by District Board agency, having a maximum number of about 800 workers, was inspected by the undersigned at various stages. He was also in charge of the famine relief work of breaking stone metal for Malkapur-Buldana road and that of improving 40 miles length of Nagpur dâk line road, the former giving relief daily to about 1,000 labourers and the latter to a maximum of 1,500 from the middle of March to the end of July 1897.

Being well in touch with the Deputy Commissioner, Buldana district, Assistant Engineer had many opportunities of learning the varying stages and conditions of distress.

Area of Buldana district and the population affected.

Buldana district comprises 2,809 square miles with a population of 481,021 souls. Of these 100,418 persons belong to the labouring classes, *i.e.*, about 25 per cent. of the whole population. Berar soil is very rich, and the cultivator, who is "fairly prosperous," is inclined to be lazy and freely employs hired labour.

Rainfall.

Average rainfall of the district during previous five years was 35·6 inches, whilst that for 1896-97 was 22·03. Owing to this short rainfall and early stoppage the kharif crop was a third of the average, and the rabi crop only an eighth.

Price of food-grain.

Jawari, which is the staple food of the population, sold at an average rate of 9 seers per rupee during distress, whilst it was a little over 23 seers per rupee in two previous years, which were normal. The price rose to a maximum of 6½ seers per rupee during the latter end of June and early in July 1897.

A

Relief works carried out according to Bombay Code.

All the relief works were first carried out strictly on the Code system of task-work as laid down in the Bombay Famine Code, which was tentatively in force in Berar.

Prescribed tasks were invariably enforced soon after the workers understood the nature of the work, so fining as not to reduce their wages below the minimum fixed by section III.

The works were opened early in March before distress could reach an acute stage, and thus work was provided for those members of labouring classes for whom owing to the untimely cessation of the rains and consequent failure of crops usual agricultural work was not available.

Distress.

Distress was due more to want of demand for labour than for high rate of food-grain, as working people had no money wherewith to purchase food-grain. There was abundance of grain in the district, and large quantities were imported from the Nizam's territories of Hyderabad.

Classification of "relief workers."

It was soon found that the classification of the "relief workers" had to be modified according to the physique of the labourer and the task achieved, his profession and antecedents having a secondary consideration.

The labourers had to be re-classified according to the actual outturn of work, though they were first classified by the Civil Officer in accordance with section 70 of Bombay Code.

Code system of classification modified.

The four-fold classification was soon given up early in May and the simpler North-Western Provinces system of classifying as B and D only, with a few male workers of special qualification as class A, was adopted on all works, with liability to fines in case of short tasks, which reduced the wages even below the minimum.

Piece-work adopted on broken stone metal works.

About the end of May piece-work by gangs was introduced on all broken stone road metal works, Sunday wages as well as gratuitous relief to children and dependents being discontinued.

The rates were regulated according to the price of food-grain as per Famine Code, and the tasks were such that none earned more than A class wages, though about 10 to 12 per cent. got less than the minimum wages.

The system worked satisfactorily for two months, till the end of July, when the works were closed.

Intermediate system tentatively tried.

What is called North-Western Provinces modified intermediate system, under which the working members of a family should have an opportunity of earning enough to support the non-working members and provide for Sunday wages, was tentatively tried on earthwork of roads about the beginning of June 1877.

As the rate offered was low and not graduated according to grain equivalents, it was doomed to fail, as it did, specially when introduced on works which were hitherto executed on daily task-work system, and that at a time when the prices were rising.

A second attempt to introduce the modified intermediate system was made early in July on the earth-work of improving Nagpur dâk line with rate graduated according to grain equivalents, and it promised to work satisfactorily; but as the price of grain was at its highest, and people hitherto accustomed to Sunday wages were in an excited state of mind and the distress was becoming acute, the task-work system with Sunday wages and gratuitous relief was reverted to till the works closed on the 31st of July 1897.

Payments.

On all works the relief workers were paid daily in the beginning and after a time twice a week only, the daily payments being made to the nearest pice.

The disbursements were made by a single cashier on one large work or two or more small works.

Co-operation of the Civil and Public Works Officers.

Much commendable co-operation existed between the Civil and Public Works Officers, who were working more on the lines of working in the Central Provinces than those laid down in sections 31 and 38 of the Bombay Code, which need amending. The immediate direction of the famine relief works was entrusted to the officers of the Public Works Department, who were responsible for enforcing discipline and directing the labour. Labourers of all kinds and of all degrees of working capacity were received on the famine relief works when they applied for admission. The Civil Officers assisted and co-operated with the Public Works Officers in charge in seeing that the relief workers were properly paid and tasked according to their strength.

B

Character of the relief works in West Berar.

The relief works consisted principally of roads or road metalling works, with some village tanks and an impounding reservoir in Akola district, besides a large earth-work cutting near Dahynda in the same district, executed at a cost of about R70,000.

Projects ready and proposed.

At the time that relief works were instituted, the larger projects for some of the new road works were ready, whilst others were those shelved in the past, after the preliminary

investigations, on the ground that there was little prospects of funds being available for them. No doubt most of them would have been put in hand in course of time if not now constructed as famine relief works. New "kutcha" roads have been constructed and existing roads improved.

The portion of Nagpur dâk line road passing through Berars, which was hitherto kept in some repairs at an annual cost of R50 per mile, has now been improved at an average cost of R250 per mile, mostly spent on earth-work.

More village tanks and impounding reservoirs in tracts where there is usual scarcity of water during hot weather were included in the programmes of works that might be undertaken if the distress had continued.

Village tanks and impounding reservoirs.

These village tanks and impounding reservoirs, besides being some of the most useful works that can be proposed, as they are of great service to adjoining villages in future seasons of drought, are a very convenient form of relief work as regards exacting task and construction, and in not imposing a permanent charge on the community.

Though small works have great disadvantages of their own as regards establishment, difficulty of supervision, want of "distance" test, and the small utility compared to expenditure, much can be done by the Civil Officer on these works in connection with his duties of village relief system, which has an important bearing on the population of the poor-houses, as work people can be easily drafted on works nearer their villages. Whilst 400,321 were relieved in Buldana district by actual work at a cost of R52,566, 405,166 persons were maintained in poor-houses and by village doles at a cost of R37,990, no less than 20,977 persons being relieved by village doles.

No financially remunerative works in Berar.

No irrigation works would pay in Berars owing to black cotton soil, and amongst the other works constructed there are none such as may be directly financially remunerative.

People would resort to works at distances.

There was no great difficulty in opening works in different parts of districts before distress had reached an acute stage.

Whilst some labourers who attended works to distances of 15 to 20 miles, there were others who had delayed resorting to works situated at distances in expectation of having works opened nearer home, but who at last resorted to distant works when the pinch was felt.

Labourers in actual want of work do not mind going to distances of 25 to 30 miles in the same district if they found the works personally advantageous.

A very large proportion of the labourers can be well marched or conveyed with great advantage to any large public works situated at distances of over 100 miles under the care of village headmen, in preference to employing them near to their own homes on works of little value and utility and entailing larger establishment for their supervision than can be managed at a time when distress is widespread.

Health of relief workers.

Weakly people resorting to works greatly improved in health after a few days on the works. The general health of work people distinctly showed that the wages earned according to the different systems in force from time to time were sufficient, even if not ample in some cases, for the maintenance of the workers and their children and dependents. No deterioration but general improvement was noticed in the physical condition of the labourers on all works. No death due to starvation may be attributed to insufficiency or inefficiency of relief works in the districts.

Stone metal.

A principal form of relief work started in the very early stage was the collection of broken stone metal for roads which were already metalled.

The quantities proposed to be collected at different quarries were such as would be required for repairs during next five years or for completing stone metalling of some of the remaining unmetalled miles of proposed metalled roads.

Though the majority of work people were not used to this kind of work, the very fact of their freely resorting even to these unpopular works in early stage served to show the necessity of opening other large works.

This form of relief work can always be easily and effectively resorted to. No accommodation is found necessary for labourers on this class of work, as they attend works from neighbouring villages situated at distances of three to four miles, returning to their homes daily. Those who come from longer distances than four to five miles do not return to their homes every night, but find shelter in adjacent villages. No reductions for " distance " are made in tasks.

Task work according to Bombay Code does not tend to economy.

The amount spent on relief works taken altogether, under varying systems, was about 32 per cent. in excess of the value of work actually executed. It was clearly seen that with distress not reaching an acute stage owing to opening of works in time, the task-work system according to the Bombay Code, with a minimum wage to be paid even if task achieved was much too low, did not tend to economy.

Railway work as famine relief work.

Early in March 1897, Deputy Commissioner, Buldana, was informed that the Superintending Engineer, Godavari Valley Railway, had opened works at Aurangabad and Jalna, and that publicity should be given to this fact in the adjoining Buldana district. Large numbers of people had gone from the south of the district at the very opening of the works, but nearly all returned.

The Deputy Commissioner, through the Tehsildars of Chikhli and Mehkar taluks, induced the people to go back to the works, and many did so, but most of them returned. The complaint was that work was given out by piece-work to contractors, and that payments by contractors were irregular and short. Thus a large relief work was of little use in a tract where the need of relief was beginning to be keenly felt, and the work of improving Nagpur dâk line road had to be opened as a relief work. The complaint of the dissatisfied work people may be interpreted to be insufficiency of wage, natural at a time when demand for employment was keen, and the Railway contractors not regulating their rates with every rise in the price of grain.

C

Piece-work system recommended for adoption except in cases of acute distress.

As stated above, during the late distress piece-work system was not introduced long enough for a fair opinion to be formed of its merits, besides its labouring under the great disadvantage of having been introduced among people who had been previously working on the task-work system.

It is, however, recommended that piece-work system should be adopted as far as possible, and the Commissioner, in consultation with the Superintending Engineer, will decide whether work is to be carried on by piece-work or daily labour.

All relief works must be commenced on piece-work system, supplemented by task-work on daily wages in cases where distress would reach a very acute stage.

The Public Works Officers will so adopt the piece-work system on each work that suitable employment may be offered to all who are drafted to the works by the Civil Officers.

Essential features of piece-work.

The essential features of the piece-work system will be the division of labour into sub-gangs, each of about 25 persons under a headman.

Four such sub-gangs will make up a gang under a mate. The work done by each sub-gang will be measured and paid for bi-weekly. Payments will be made on the works, in the presence of the sub-gang, to the headman, who will distribute the wages on the spot.

No Sunday wages.

No Sunday wages will be paid, but the piece-work rates, which will vary with the price of grain, will be so worked out that labourers doing fair tasks will be able to earn the daily wages as laid down for ordinary task-work, including extra wage in lieu of Sunday.

Mr. J. M. Vacha.

8th Mar. 1898.

Experience has shown that payment of Sunday wages as such has a demoralizing effect. The Sunday wages should therefore be abolished and a corresponding increase should be made in the dietary scale upon which the week-day wage and piece-work rates are calculated, so as to leave the total for the week unaltered.

Piece-work with gratuitous relief if absolutely necessary.

As long as piece-work rates are regulated according to grain equivalents, the piece-work system should be kept on, even by giving in absolutely necessary cases gratuitous relief to dependents and children on the recommendation of the Deputy Commissioner.

Such labourers as might be too weak or incompetent to earn a subsistence wage on the rates offered will be put on some light work on daily labour wages, the piece-work system being more for exacting better task from all persons than for relieving the weak.

In case of inefficient labour and acute distress task-work should be adopted.

Only when the demand by inefficient labour for employment on piece-work system becomes considerable and acute distress is present, the piece-work system of payment by results be discontinued and task-work by daily labour substituted for it.

Daily labour according to Mr. Higham's classification.

When relief works are carried out by daily labour, the relief workers shall be divided into two principal classes—"digger" and "carrier," besides one "special" class which will include all workers of special qualifications as mates, expert quarrymen, etc., the details being worked out according to the suggestions contained in Mr. Higham's report; higher wage being given for tasks executed 25 per cent. or more in excess of the standard tasks.

As stated above, gratuitous relief of dependents and children should depend on the degree of distress. It should be given only on a recommendation of the Deputy Commissioner, and whenever possible only by means of kitchens under the management of the Civil Officer, the adults receiving either a cooked or a dry grain ration.

D

Some recommendations for consideration.

Relief will be firstly on works for all in need of relief who are able to labour, and secondly at their homes for those unable to labour but in need of relief. Public Works Department should be given a sufficiently free hand on relief works with a Civil Officer to supervise admission to works, leaving classification of workers to the Public Works Officer, Civil Officer having had no experience in the organization and management of large bodies of labourers.

Only small works employing not more than 500 labourers should be under the charge of the Civil Officers.

A wider discretion and greater control should be given to Public Works Officers than allowed by the strict letter of the Bombay Code. When a large proportion of labourers are not used to the kind of work, the standard task must be modified during the early stage of the work till the workers get accustomed.

No applicants who have come short distances should be drafted on the works till the Civil Officer has ascertained their distress from Circle Inspectors. Residence in camps on works must also be made a condition of relief. Labourers must be continuously drafted from smaller works to the larger ones.

The railway works should be executed by the Public Works Department as ordinary relief works on the piece-work system as detailed above.

(*President.*)—I see from your written evidence that you were engaged in the months of January and February 1897 in preparing plans, etc. Did you work in connection with the famine operations up to the end?—Yes, up to July 1897, when all Public Works Department works in connection with famine relief closed.

You say in your written evidence that the Berar soil is rich and that the cultivator, who is "fairly rich," freely employs hired labour. Can you tell us what rates he pays?—Three to four annas for a man, and nine pice for a woman.

Do you think that this rate is sufficient for a family to live on? Have you gone into that question?—Yes. At Malkapur I found that a family on an average required 24 ounces per day per head. On an average a good-working man of the Mhar class requires 32 ounces. But from the average I have taken of some 10 or 12 families I find 24 ounces sufficient for an adult member per day. A strong adult man will eat 32 ounces, but the average is 24 ounces, exclusive of condiments but inclusive of dâl.

Have you gone into the question about children?—No.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—You began your work on the Bombay system?—Yes.

Did you drop all the four classes A, B, C and D?—First A and C, and B eventually; but had to keep them on D in order to avoid fining.

What proportion had you in D class?—Small proportion, half to half B and D.

Had you separate classes in the gangs?—A, B, C in one gang, and D in the other. A gang consisted of one quarryman, a child who carried chips, and 6 others—8 in all—but they were all tasked together—7 small gangs of this kind made one large gang. We had 57 labourers in each gang of this kind.

How did you fine them?—According to the outturn of each sub-gang.

You did that in May?—Yes.

You think the "intermediate system" was not a success?—No, when this system was introduced I was told to pay them 2 to 3 annas per 100 cubic feet, but at this time the rate of grain had gone up to 8 to 9 seers instead of 12, and so it was not possible to work the system.

Do you think the system would have failed if you had paid better rates?—No, I do not think it would have in that case. I was told to give the system a second trial, but at that time jawari was sold at 6½ seers per rupee, and so a fair trial could not be given to it.

What rates did you pay eventually?—I paid them according to the Bombay system. I changed the rates from week to week, as the price of jawari was varying.

Did your piece-work consist of metal breaking?—Yes.

How did you distribute work?—I laid out my plan according to the Bombay Code. A gang of certain number of workers to receive B scale, then a certain number C, and so on, I regulated the work.

Did they like it?—Yes, they were satisfied.

Was your work at a distance from the villages?—Yes, though in Berar there are many adjacent villages.

How far were they from each other?—Fifteen to 20 miles and on the Nagpur dâk lines 20 miles generally. The people kept on to the works on the roads, even up to 20 miles. I however noticed that as we were moving camps, 4 or 5 miles, three or four from each gang fell off.

You had some railway work under you?—No, not actually under me. It was outside the Buldana district. The railway works commenced between Aurangabad and Jalna, about 6 miles from Buldana.

What were they doing?—Railway embankment and earth-works were started, but no people would go to the works. I however understand that the people did go to the works in the beginning, but they came away being dissatisfied.

Did the railway people complain?—Yes.

What was the rate paid by the railway?—Rupees 2-14-8 per 1,000 cubic feet contract rate; this was in Government of India currency, and is equivalent to R3-8 in the Nizam's currency.

How did the rates paid by the railway compare with those offered under the intermediate system?—The rate under the intermediate system, with jawari at 6½ seers per rupee, was R5-3-0 according to Bombay Code, the maximum rate per 1,000 cubic feet (or R6-3-9 in Nizam's currency).

Could they get labourers at the rates offered by them?—Yes, lots from Moglai territory.

Could they get enough labourers?—Yes.

(*President.*)—Men in good condition?—Yes, they were mostly "Wadhars."

(*Mr. Higham.*)—Did the "Wadhars" come to your works?—Not many.

Did you pay the dependents?—Yes, when we were working on the Bombay Code, except when we tried the intermediate system.

When did you drop paying the dependents?—When we introduced the intermediate system.

Had you any weak labourers who could not earn a wage?—No, I had none of that kind.

They were all supposed to earn the minimum wage?—Yes.

(*President.*)—You say in your written evidence that the essential features of piece-work system will be the division of labour into sub-gangs. On what system will you form your sub-gangs?—I mean family gangs, so that all the members of one family may work together. I would put two, three or four families together under one man to form them into one gang.

You say payment of the Sunday wage as such has a demoralizing effect?—I found that when they knew that they would get Sunday wage without having to work for it, the people showed signs of laziness on the third and fourth days, but when they had to work extra in order to earn the Sunday wage, I found that they helped each other to get over their task and were keen about finishing their work in time.

When that happened you were giving an extra payment of 25 per cent. above their task?—No, we had classified them as B or D class, which was enough to give them the extra required.

In forming these family gangs did you find any difficulty about weakly persons?—No, not much.

Is there any objection to men and women doing the same kind of work being given the same rates?—I don't think the man will keep quiet over it; he will kick up a row.

According to the Bombay Code the difference between the wages of a man and woman is only *one pice*?—I think they did revolt against that arrangement, but as the payment was all made to the same families, it did not make much difference to them.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—You say in your written note, that weakly people resorting to works greatly improved in health after a few days on works; were the rations good?—The same as under the Bombay Code, generally B and C; we had not the D ration then.

You further say no deterioration but general improvement was noticed in the physical condition of the labourers on all works?—I found that the people were very healthy, no sickness except ordinary fever.

You had them all on B and C rations?—Many on *B*, very few on *C* and none in *D*.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—The North-Western Provinces classification you introduced is cheaper than the Bombay rate?—Yes. *Mr. J. M. Vacha.* *8th Mar. 1898.*

When did you introduce it?—It was tried in May.

Was it according to the Bombay classification of A, B?—No, the B and D classification. All women who were classified as *B* class got woman's wages. The diggers were generally in *B* and other men in *D*. Even weak men who could only fill baskets were put in *D*; women were mostly in D class. We had therefore the majority of them on B and D classes.

Do you think that was sufficient?—Yes.

Did they object to this new classification?—Not to my knowledge.

In reality were their wages reduced by the arrangement?—No, I think it was more to their advantage. They did not grumble.

Did the children get much less?—The working children got D.

What did you give them?—Ten chattaks, or its money equivalent. The effect of this was to reduce the payment to children.

There was a practical change?—Yes.

Had you any contractors under the piece-work system?—No.

Had you any contractors when you introduced piece-work?—No.

In piece-work you would have separate gangs for infirm people?—Yes.

You propose that a wider discretion and greater control should be given to Public Works Department Officers than is allowed by the strict letter of the Bombay Code; who did the classification?—The Civil Officers. The Civil Officer should simply attend to supplying grain, etc., and have nothing to do with classification.

Did you not alter his classification?—Yes, after admission of the people we had to make our own classification. In one or two cases they wanted us to put people in *B* or *D* class when we thought that it should be otherwise.

Do you think Mr. Higham's rates for "task" proper?—Yes.

You would give that rate without allowance to dependants?—Yes, except in cases of acute distress.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—You had more women than men on your works?—Yes, children and women taken together come to 65 per cent., and we had 35 per cent. men.

(*President.*)—You had a great number of tanks built in Buldana; were they intended for irrigation or watering the cattle?—For watering the cattle, not irrigation.

MR. RUSTOMJI FARIDONJI, Deputy Commissioner, Basim District, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence. *Mr. Rustomji Faridonji.* *8th Mar. 1898.*

A

All the measures of relief stated in the Bombay Famine Code, with the exception of kitchens for dependents and non-working children, were adopted in the Basim district, *viz.*:—

(1) the opening of large and small relief works;
(2) relief in poor-houses by gratuitous supply of cooked food to destitute persons;
(3) gratuitous relief, given in the form of doles, to incapable famine-stricken people at their houses;
(4) suspension of land-revenue;
(5) loans to agriculturists;
(6) State-forest opened out for grazing at reduced rates, with other concessions;
(7) the mahu a crop on Government lands was given free to the people;
(8) subscriptions were raised under Section 153 of the Code to maintain two poor-houses in the district.

Besides these measures of State relief, a cheap grain shop was started at Basim, it being maintained by subscriptions, and relief was also afforded to people from the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund.

2. The following departures from the principles of the Bombay Famine Code were made in this district.

As the relief works were in progress, the female workers were paid the minimum wage for all classes prescribed in the Code, *viz.*, the money equivalent of 13 chattaks of grain. Working children were divided into two classes—(1) children over 12 and under 16, who received the value of 10 chattaks of grain, and (2) children over 7 and under 12, who received the equivalent of 6 chattaks. All non-working children and infants were paid the equivalent of 3 chattaks of grain. Males who were too old or infirm to dig, but able to work, were paid the equivalent of 14 chattaks, which is the minimum wage for males of all classes. The rest of the male workers were paid the minimum B class wage, *viz.*, the equivalent of 19 chattaks. No men were put under Class A. These changes were made in accordance with North-Western Provinces Circular No. 18, Public Works Department, dated 3rd December 1896, as it was observed that the proportion of women and working children was far in excess of the male workers, the former being probably attracted to the works more by the liberal scale of wage laid down in the Bombay Famine Code than by actual want.

At a later stage the modified intermediate system laid down in North-Western Provinces Resolution No. $\frac{753}{S.\ 73}$, dated 16th March 1897, was tried on one of the large works, but

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the work was closed shortly afterwards owing to the rains, and the system did not have a fair trial.

On one of the large works a Naib Tehsildar was appointed special civil officer without any magisterial powers, in accordance with the North-Western Provinces Rules of December 1896.

No huts were provided on the works till the approach of the monsoon, but camping grounds with shade were marked out and all sanitary arrangements were made. The object was not to make the work people too comfortable so as to render the works attractive. The want of hutting arrangements did not seem to affect the health of the workers.

B

3. The measures adopted were successful in the relief of distress and the saving of human life. The mortality was certainly comparatively high in the months of July, August, September and October 1897, but this was the indirect result of want and not starvation. Those from the poorer classes who were loath to go to relief works were reduced to a low condition owing to insufficient nourishment, and they succumbed to the diseases which attack a weak constitution. There were 32 cases of deaths due to starvation, of whom 11 were immigrants. These cases had escaped the vigilance of the police and relief officers, and some of them, who were eventually found and taken to the hospital or the poor-house, were far too exhausted to recover. If the North-Western Provinces Rules as regards scale of wages and classification of workers had been adopted at the commencement, the works would have been more economically managed.

The total number of workers and their dependents relieved in the district was as follows:—

Men	149,280
Women	195,993
Children	84,664
Non-working children	145,241

The following figures show what their relief would cost under the Bombay Famine Code and the North-Western Provinces Rules of December 1896:—

BOMBAY FAMINE CODE.

Jawari selling at 20lbs. per rupee.

Adult male. B Class.		Adult males. B Class.	As per Appendix V of Bombay Famine Code.					
			R	a.	p.		R	a. p.
1	:	149,280	::	0	1 11 (a)	=	17,882	8 0
Adult female. B Class.		Adult females. B Class.						
1	:	195,993	::	0	1 7 (b)	=	19,395	2 3
Child.		Children.						
1	:	84,664	::	0	1 6 (c)	=	7,937	4 0
Non-working child.		Non-working children.						
1	:	145,241	::	0	0 6	=	4,538	12 6
							49,753	10 9

NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES CIRCULAR No. 18-P. W., DATED 3RD DECEMBER 1896.

Jawari selling at 20lbs. per rupee.

Adult male. B Class.		Adult males. B Class.		R	a.	p.	R	a. p.
1	:	149,280	::	0	1 9 (d)	=	16,327	0 0
Adult female.		Adult females.						
1	:	195,993	::	0	1 3 (e)	=	15,311	15 3
Child.		Children.						
1	:	84,664	::	0	0 9 (f)	=	3,968	10 0
Non-working child.		Non-working children.						
1	:	145,241	::	0	0 3	=	2,269	6 3
							37,876	15 6

C

4. I think the classification of workers according to the Bombay Code is far too complex and elaborate. I would recommend the adoption of the simple classification given in Mr. Higham's final note, and I would also recommend the scale of wages given in that note being adopted. It was observed on the relief works in this district, that the scale of wages given in the Bombay Code, which was followed for some time, attracted women and children in large numbers, while the men stayed away.

5. I should give a Sunday wage separately, but only to those who have worked for the six preceding days.

6. Under the Bombay Code the classification of workers is left to the special civil officer, who ordinarily is not qualified for such a task. There is no reason why this work should not be entrusted to the Public Works Department officers, who have professional knowledge of the subject.

Any severity exercised by the Public Works Department subordinates in classification can be easily checked by their superiors and other inspecting officers.

7. I do not think piece-work in any shape is suitable for famine relief. In the first place it would be difficult to form gangs the units of which would work in harmony and share the wages in fair proportion, as people from a particular village would not necessarily seek admission at one time. Applicants come in driblets from different villages, and in practice it is not always possible to separate the weak from the strong; nor will the weak workers always have able-bodied relations on a work so that they can between them turn out a fair amount of work and earn a subsistence wage. The gangs will thus, as a rule, be formed of incoherent material, and will be entirely at the mercy of their headmen. The strong will be able to earn more than they want, and the weak, who may happen to have no able-bodied relations or friends on the work, will not earn a subsistence wage, which will eventually drive them to the poor-house. On these considerations I think the piece-work system is opposed to the principles of famine relief works. I think each individual should work according to his capacity, and should be paid according to a fixed standard, and punished by fines when he is found to be slack.

8. I agree with Mr. Higham, that payments should be made daily on works. The advantages of daily payments outweigh the undoubted inconvenience which Government officials are thereby put to. Daily payments minimize the chances of fraud.

9. As suggested by Mr. Higham it would be preferable to have large works instead of small works at the early stage of famine, but large works are not suited as test works. It may be found on starting a large work that there was no necessity for opening relief works at all, and a large machinery set in motion would have to be stopped, which would involve great loss to Government. I agree with Mr. Higham that the work should not be too near the homes of villagers for whom it is intended. A person who would not travel 15 or 20 miles to a relief work could not be much in need of State relief.

10. I think the object of famine relief works is likely to be defeated if the Collector is not allowed to exercise effective control on works in charge of the Public Works Department in all matters not purely professional or technical. It may sometimes be difficult to distinguish what is professional or technical, but any disagreement on the point could be easily settled by higher authorities, while any hard and fast definitions would, I fear, lead to complications. I think he should have some control in the matter of fines, on the question of opening or closing a relief work, and on the

(*a*) Maximum wage for an adult male of B class.

(*b*) Do. female do.

(*c*) Do. working child between 7 and 12 years of age.

(*d*) Money equivalent of 19 chattaks of grain prescribed for male diggers.

(*e*) Money equivalent of 13 chattaks of grain prescribed for adult females.

(*f*) Money equivalent of 6 chattaks of grain prescribed for working children over 7 and under 12 years of age.

NOTE.—By adopting the rate of wages prescribed in the North-Western Provinces Circular No. 18, dated 3rd December 1896, instead of the Bombay Code rates, there would be a saving of 23·8 per cent., taking all the males as diggers. If some of the males are classed as non-diggers, then the saving would be even greater; but statistics are not available to distinguish diggers from non-diggers.

question of the task or piece-work system being introduced on a work.

11. It would be advisable to grant loans under the Land Improvement Loans Act without interest and on the stipulation of a certain percentage thereof being remitted if the work for which the loan has been obtained is completed within a certain time. This would induce the obtaining and spending of large sums on agricultural improvements, which would keep the agricultural labourers near their own homes, and it would not be necessary for Government to open a large number of relief works, some of them of doubtful utility, to provide labour for the needy. I have no doubt that well-to-do agriculturists will take advantage of such a concession.

12. I would also suggest semi-gratuitous relief being given to respectable persons and artizans, incapable of doing ordinary labour, and *parda nashin* women (provided with tickets) by the opening of grain shops at central places and sale of grain to such persons below the market rate. As regards kitchens, I do not think it is advisable to open them independent of works, as it would facilitate fraud, in that people in receipt of doles in villages would also seek relief in kitchens.

(*President.*)—Where is the Basim District?—In the Berars. It is bounded by the Akola district on the north, part of Amraoti and Wun districts on the east, and the Moglai territory on the south.

Were you in charge of the Basim District throughout the scarcity?—Yes.

How long have you been in the Berars?—About eight years.

Did the prices of food-grains go up very high?—Yes, three times the ordinary rates.

In what month?—In August 1897; it was then slightly over seven seers.

Do you know what the rates were in August 1896?—I should say about 20 seers.

In October 1896?—It ranged between 12 and 15 seers.

I suppose the sudden rise was due to panic?—More due to the bad harvest and large exports.

In October were the people holding back the grain or selling it?—I think they were largely exporting then. We had a large import from the Moglai, and even this stock was being exported to Akola and Amraoti.

Does the Basim District export grain generally?—No, very little in ordinary years.

How much?—I have no statistics.

You say "a cheap grain shop" was started at Basim; who opened it?—Shop-keepers, money-lenders, pleaders, and respectable agriculturists.

Was it on a large scale?—Yes, and similar shops were tarted in the district in the beginning of the famine.

Was it open once a week or daily?—It was open every day.

How were prices fixed?—They were one or two seers below the current rate; practically a great loss was thus incurred by selling below the current rate.

In all cases?—Yes.

Where did you get the grain from?—Mostly from the Moglai and the eastern part of the district.

Then apparently the ordinary grain-dealers were not selling at extravagant prices?—I don't think so.

They could afford to sell and buy again?—Yes.

Do you think that these cheap grain shops did much good?—Yes, I think they did immense good.

Do you think they had any effect on prices?—Yes, in Basim to a certain extent.

How?—When our grain was taken to the market and sold cheaper than the current rates, the grain-dealers had to reduce their rates; they were prevented from holding out for too high prices.

Do you think otherwise they would have held out for high prices longer?—Yes, they would have for some time.

Were loans given to the agriculturists?—Yes, nearly ₹15,000. I had applications for about one lakh, but could not get more allotments.

For what purpose were these loans used?—For digging wells and improving fields.

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You think they were properly applied?—Yes.

Are the improvements completed?—Yes, in a great many cases.

Any wells for irrigation?—Yes.

Do you think that if these loans had been given earlier the recipients would have employed their own villagers or employed *wadars* and professionals from outside?—No, they would have engaged labour from their own village, at cheap rates.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Do your remarks in paragraphs 2 and 3 of your written evidence apply to works under the Public Works Department or works under the District Local Board?—To both works.

You began with the Bombay classification?—Yes.

And introduced the North-Western Provinces system later on?—Yes. I think in February we had the Bombay system; in March or April we introduced the North-Western Provinces system.

You say the women were paid the minimum wage for all classes prescribed in the Code. Do you mean that they were classed as *D*?—Yes.

Who were on the *B* scale?—Those who digged.

Your classification kept people who were not in actual need from coming to the relief works?—Yes; only those in actual need came.

This reduced the numbers on the works?—Yes.

In paragraph 2 of your written evidence you observe that the Bombay Code wages attracted women and children in large numbers, while the men kept away. Why was this?—Because under the Bombay Code the women earned higher wages than they could elsewhere, but the North-Western Provinces wages were simply subsistence wages, and did not attract them.

What did the women get under the North-Western Provinces system?—Thirteen chattaks. I do not think that that would be sufficient to keep them in health to be able to work for a long time, but they did not deteriorate in any way in health.

How long could they have stayed without deteriorating?—About three months.

What castes had you?—Mostly low castes.

Don't you think they had dead cattle, etc., to supplement their rations or wages?—I doubt whether they could have got them on the works. It could not be had in sufficient quantity to affect the rations.

Was there any cheaper grain than jowari?—No, I do not think so.

Did the children get Sunday wages?—Yes.

I suppose they were not fined below the minimum wage?—No.

How many people had you on the works?—About 11,000.

In your paragraph 7 you say piece-work is not suitable for famine relief. Had you any experience of piece-work?—Very little, but I am speaking from what I heard on enquiry.

In paragraph 9 you say it would be preferable to have large works instead of small works at the early stage of famine. Had you large works in your district?—Yes.

Any large tanks?—No, irrigation is not wanted in our district; it is all black soil.

Had you any programme before you started your works?—No.

In paragraph 11 you say that it would be advisable to grant loans under the Land Improvement Loans Act without interest, and on the stipulation of a certain percentage thereof being remitted if the work for which the loan is obtained is completed within a certain time. Did you make any such remissions?—No, we were not allowed to make the remission.

Your paragraph 12 regarding semi-gratuitous relief. Had you any in your district?—Very few, in the shape of grain doles.

Did the respectable persons and artizans come to the works?—Very few.

Did you notice them on the works?—Yes, but very few.

Did they suffer on the works?—I do not think they were able to work.

Were they on stone-breaking or earthwork?—Earthwork.

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What did they do?—Mostly carrying.

You did not attempt to relieve them in their own trade?—No.

(*President.*)—I see you have been comparing the Bombay rates and the North-Western Provinces rates. Do you think the rates, 9 pie for a working child and 3 pie for a non-working child, sufficient?—It seemed to keep them in good health; they did not suffer.

How long were these rates paid?—Three months. The wages of the parents, combined with those of the children, were supposed to be sufficient for them.

You think the parents gave them some help?—Yes.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—Did you commence working exclusively on the Bombay system?—Yes, for some months.

After that you adopted the North-Western Provinces system. Did that affect the proportion of men who came to the works?—I think so. Those not in need of relief keept away, mostly women and children.

Women get paid less and the men rather more than they ought under the North-Western Provinces rates, do they not?—Yes; the idea was to bring on the works more men than women, and to keep out the women.

Had you any kitchens?—No.

According to the statement in paragraph 3 of your written evidence, you had 84,664 working children and 145,241 non-working children. Don't you think that the proportion was excessive?—Yes, but I think they were all *bonâ fide* dependants of the workers.

MR. C. BAGSHAWE, Conservator of Forests, Hyderabad Assigned Districts, called in and examined.

Mr. C. Bagshawe.

8th Mar. 1898.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

1. The remarks in this note are based solely on experiences of relief operations in hill districts and among aborigines or hill people, who have little in common with the inhabitants of the plains of India.

2. The Famine Code should, I think, contain a paragraph noting that when famine prevails among aborigines in wild or hilly districts, the special characteristics of the people should be studied, and relief be afforded in the spirit rather than according to the letter of the code, and that Commissioners should be empowered to modify or suspend any provisions of the provincial code in connection with such affected areas.

3. In justification of this recommendation I note that hill men, aborigines, and forest tribes are not given to steady hard work or method in the conduct of their work in life. They are often very shy, and rather than move far from their homes or apply for relief in case of need, they are ready to suffer quietly, and frequently to die; on the other hand, they are amenable to orders, and quite willing to work if treated with consideration and sympathy.

4. In connection with—

(i) test works,

(ii) major as opposed to minor relief works of utility,

(iii) classification of labour.

(iv) task and piece-work in the Melghat.

(i). To have opened test works on strict code orders would have been equivalent to attempting to justify a sentence to starvation to death: not a soul would have come till months after famine set in.

(ii). To have tried extensive works in a few localities in place of minor works in every part of the taluk would have been to court failure because—

(*a*) the best of the people hate leaving their homes;

(*b*) epidemics like cholera and small-pox would probably have broken out and stopped the works, as aborigines, it is known, dread and fly from epidemics.

(iii). As regards classification of labour, the people recognize skilled labourers, like masons, or trained gangs for blasting work on roads, etc.; ordinary labouring men, women and children.

To have attempted to sub-divide the latter into A, B, C, D, etc., would have engendered suspicion, while it was nigh impossible in view of the large number of scattered minor works which had to be supervised by a small staff.

It is probable this difficulty would be experienced in any hilly district. The practice in the Melghat was to class labour as described above and to give a low normal rate of wage, with the proviso that all dependents should be maintained by the workers.

The low normal rate of wage was fixed on Famine Relief Code lines with reference to the price of food on the works, and the price of food and the wage were kept unchanged as far as feasible for each period of the famine, *i.e.*, winter, summer, rains.

(iv). With regard to piece-work, *i.e.*, petty contract with rates to cover one holiday a week and the maintenance of workers' dependents, the plan was tried on two of the Melghat relief works. It only answered where the labourers taking piece-work were specially trained to skilled labour, like building walls and blasting rock, and also accustomed to work together in gangs. In the few cases where small gangs of this class, 20 to 30 strong, took up work, the plan answered. As a rule the plan was not found suitable, and it could not be adopted on any considerable scale in districts like the Melghat.

As regards "task-work," it was found impossible to introduce the system of individual tasks owing to the small staff and the varying character of the work on the hill roads utilized as relief works.

All that could be done was to periodically measure up some work, and if, after allowing for an undue proportion of women and children as labourers, the work was much above the normal outturn of work on forest roads, the overseers and the labourers were first warned, and on a second shortcoming, fined.

5. Two methods of indirect relief during a time of famine on wild tracts seem to merit recognition; these are:—

(i) Aiding artisans and petty purchasers of forest produce by allowing them drawbacks on their payments to Government for timber, etc.

(ii) Establishing shops for the sale of cheap food to the above classes, and thus enabling them to feed themselves and their families without abandoning their homes and resorting to ordinary famine relief works, etc.

Or, putting it briefly, to reduce the cost of raw material and of subsistence to families who make a living by converting and selling timber, bamboos, and other forest products, and so to enable them to live by their usual pursuits.

6. In the Melghat probably one-fourth of the population live for a large part of the year on the profits of converting and selling timber, etc. It was a matter of vital importance to keep these people in their villages and to prevent overcrowding of ordinary relief works.

Famine lowered the market prices of timber and raised the rates for food, thus hitting the exporter classes both as sellers and buyers.

A general reduction of "forest" charges for timber, etc., would have been followed by a corresponding fall in market prices; the plan adopted was to sell certain kinds of timber at nominal rates to petty exporters, and in the case of bamboos to allow a rebate of 33 per cent. when the exporter returned from market. Minor produce was either bought from the collector at enhanced rates or given him free to export. The result of these steps was that prices in the markets were not perceptibly affected by the concessions described.

7. Shops for the sale of cheap food to our petty exporters, etc., were worked on Government advances through grain sellers, or, where these failed, directly by Government. Grain was usually sold at the rate prevailing in the nearest large market, which was 30 to 60 miles away. A system of tickets was adopted with a maximum amount for daily sales to one person or a family.

The Government shops were mainly used in the rainy season, when many private shops closed.

The plan effected a treble purpose—

(i) putting food on sale where local stocks were nearly *nil*;

(ii) bringing food at fair prices within the reach of artizans, etc.;

(iii) keeping down prices in unsubsidized grain shops.

8. The result of the measures described, combined with limited aid from ordinary relief works, helped to keep in their homes a population of about 11,000 in and near the reserved forests of the Melghat.

(*President.*)—What is your charge?—My charge includes the forest tracts of Berar, some 1,500 square miles, with the Kinwat Ghat and the Matagang range.

Had you charge of the special famine relief works?—The Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Williamson, was in real charge, but I mostly supervised those in the Melghat Taluk.

How long have you been in the Berars?—Five years.

And before that?—I was in the North-Western Provinces.

Were any special forest concessions given?—Yes.

When was the famine relief work begun in the Melghat Taluk?—There was pressure in the Melghat Taluk in 1895, we helped them in the rains of 1896, and commenced regular relief works in December 1896.

What was the scarcity due to?—Failure of crops and short rain in the Province.

When did you begin regular famine relief work?—On the 18th December 1896.

What kind of works?—Nearly all road works, but we also deepened wells, cleaned tanks, and repaired roads.

How were they managed?—By the Forest staff.

Not by the Public Works Department?—No.

How did you fix the wages?—In cash in the beginning when we fixed a rough wage of 4 annas to the men, 3 annas to the women, and 1½ to the children; and when the works were regularly opened, we gave 3 annas to the men, 2½ to the women and 1½ to the children.

How did you treat the dependants?—No dependants were paid, nor did we pay the non-working children; the rates paid were supposed to cover the expenses of these dependants. But in June many weakly persons came in, and we had to open poor-houses, drafting those who were unable to work on the works. These weakly persons were paid 2 annas, both men and women, that is just what it cost us to keep them on the works.

How did you get your grain?—It was imported mostly by Government. From December to May banias kept their shops open, while we bought and stored for consumption in the rains.

At what rate?—Eight seers a rupee, the rates prevailing in the Ellichpur and Akola districts.

Did you fix the wages with reference to the prevailing grain rate?—Yes, the wages were regulated according to the rate of food-grains; during the rains, however, we found it necessary to put more children on gratuitous relief.

Had you kitchens or grain doles?—We gave free grain doles; we found that it was very little use giving them money.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—On the works you paid them in money?—Yes, the men, women and children were paid in money on the works.

Did the people seem to keep their health on the works?—Yes, those who stayed on the works and those who stayed at the relief centres kept their condition well. But the people who remained in their villages ran down very much.

Had you large numbers from the villages?—We relieved about 11,000 out of a population of 47,000. Besides giving them relief in the shape of food, we allowed them to cut cheap wood and timber from the forest at cheap rates, and allowed them to export it. Shops were also opened for the benefit of these people where they could purchase cheap grain.

What class of people are you referring to?—All classes of villagers, including Gonds, Gowlis, Bhils, Mahars and others.

Did they take advantage of those facilities?—Most of them are an idle class of people, who did little or no work, partly owing to shyness in coming in contact with the other villagers and a great deal owing to laziness. They are accustomed to do a certain kind of work, and it is very hard to get them to do any other kind of work.

What is the reason of their shyness?—Well, I think they have hardly seen Europeans except of late. Up to about 30 years ago no European went near the Melghat. They are a wild people.

Do you think they had any special objection to go to the works and mix with strange people?—A certain number did come, but they would not stay.

Have the Gowlis many cattle?—Those who came to the works had hardly any.

Are they aborigines?—No, the ordinary Gowli is not, but the "Korku" Gowlis are aborigines.

Were the grain wages paid to the Gowlis reduced?—No.

Did they lose their cattle?—No, we purchased their cattle, and in other cases they had the forest at their service to which to take their cattle, and so they did not suffer.

Any Lambanis or Banjaris among your workers?—No. The Banjaris were buying grain and carrying on a trade.

You said just now you relieved 11,000 out of a total population of 47,000: is that the total of the taluka?—I am referring to the people in and near the reserved forests of the Melghat.

Had you any wanderers?—Yes, a good many came from Betul, Nimar, and Hoshangabad. During the rains we arranged to send them back to Betul.

How many of these wanderers had you?—About 500 to 600.

Were they found to be in bad condition?—Some of those who came from long distances were in bad condition.

I see Mr. Williamson, in his written evidence, speaks of "relief centres," how many of these had you?—About 20. We had no proper poor-houses, but there were depôts at which food was given in the shape of uncooked grain, *jowari*, dal, salt, etc.

Were these near your relief camps?—Near the villages, but the majority of those on gratuitous relief lived in huts at the relief centre.

How many?—About 3,200; on an average we had always about 200 at each centre.

Did you give them doles daily?—No, they took a week's dole.

Were they weakly people?—Yes, all feeble people put on in the weak gangs.

Did your Forest Inspectors or Forest Rangers visit the villages?—Yes, three European and Native officers visited the villages, and they induced able-bodied men without work to go to the relief works. The Patwari also was told to induce the people to go to the relief works.

Had you any help from the Mansion House Fund?—Yes, we gave relief from it to those who wanted money to purchase grain, cattle, ploughs, seed, etc., and started them in life again.

Mr. Williamson says in paragraph 34 that the workers were supposed to support their dependants: does he include the children; he does not mention the children at all in his evidence?—The children were kept separate at the relief centres, but for the children with the parents we gave the parents one anna extra for every incapable child.

In the relief centre you gave grain?—Yes.

Mr. Williamson, in paragraph 11 of his evidence, objects to tasks being laid down: how could he get a fair day's work without some task?—We measured 30 per cent. under the contract rate, and told the people that if they did not finish that work they would be fined; as a rule they worked well.

I understand from Mr. Williamson's paragraph 8 that there was a great migration of the hill people?—Yes, these people generally come to the plains in search of work during the harvest, but this time they found that there was no harvest and so there was no work for them. If some relief works had been open for them earlier on the hills they would not have migrated.

Did the death-rate increase?—We have no statistics in the Melghat. The death-rate must have been high among the old and the children, not from actual starvation but from diseases and eating unwholesome food.

In Mr. Williamson's paragraph 28, in answer to question No. 95, he says he would pay the equivalent of 12, 10 and 8 chattaks staple grain respectively to the three classes *plus* one pice for condiments—do you agree?—Yes. I think it is a very sound proposal, and that is what we were really doing; children below 14 got 6 chattaks; all in grain.

Mr. C. Bagshawe.

8th Mar. 1898.

What was the price of grain when you fixed your equivalent in cash?—8 seers a rupee; we calculated a normal family of five dependants, and the cash equivalent was based on what would be sufficient for them; we calculated that three quarters of a seer of flour was sufficient for a man.

Did not the people get *Mowha* in addition to the grain?—Yes, they used to collect *Mowha* from the forest and mix the *Mowha* with flour.

Can these people live on jungle products without grain?—No, they cannot absolutely live without grain.

I suppose the assumption that an adult can live on 1½lbs. of flour is based on the presumption that he can collect *Mowha* and other edible roots?—No, but during the *Mowha* season and when the people could get jungle fruits to live on, many left the works; I should say more than half.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—When did the influx of people from the Central Provinces take place?—From December 1896 to May 1897.

What special concessions, as regards forest produce, did you allow them?—They were allowed to cut wood, timber, bamboos, and grass and sell them in the bazars at reduced rates.

Any "Hara" in the jungles?—Yes.

Did they avail themselves of these concessions?—I think so, because out of the 11,000 we relieved we had very few of the aborigines. But on the whole they were very lazy at work.

There are villages of these aborigines in the forest, are there not?—Yes, they render us petty forest labour.

Was cheap grain sold to these people?—Yes, especially at "fire-wood" markets, where they brought wood for sale.

Did you give any money advances to the petty cultivators among the aboriginal tribes?—Yes, we did advance them money without interest.

Who bore the loss sustained in selling them cheap grain?—Government bore the expenses of carriage, commission, and actual loss.

Was the money earned by these people by selling forest produce sufficient to keep them and their families?—Yes, it kept them going; very few starved.

You had numerous small works opened for them?—Yes, about seven road works over a distance of about 150 miles.

What did you pay them?—Men 10 chattaks, women 8 chattaks.

What did you give those in the poor-houses?—Three annas and 2½ annas.

How did you calculate this?—We took a normal family of five members and calculated what would be necessary for their maintenance.

What was the average collective wage of these five members of your ideal family?—Seven annas.

Did these rates attract the people?—They did not flock to the works. The works were not popular.

But you think the amount calculated by you sufficient?—Yes, to these hill-tribes.

(*President.*)—Referring to the Rev. Mr. Windsor's written evidence, do you think he is correct in saying that during the famine thousands of Central Provinces people entered the Berars?—Yes, it is quite accurate; we had a tremendous influx from the Central Provinces. They ran the rates of the labourer down to 1½ annas a day.

The cheap shops mentioned by Mr. Windsor are the same as those mentioned by you, are they not?—Yes.

You kept down the bazar rates in Ellichpur?—Yes.

Mr. Windsor says "the majority of people came to the poor-house as skeletons. They were not merely kept alive but with few exceptions were turned out fit for work"?—Yes, in the poor-house people who were very thin became strong. I think the relief centre rations were quite sufficient.

Are these Korkus a weakly people?—No, they are short and plump.

Mr. Windsor suggests payment to labourers in grain instead of money. Do you approve of this?—I do not object, but I would rather pay the man in cash for the work done. On the Mission works I think they paid the people in grain; they had some 1,500 men to whom they gave grain doles.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Was the mortality from dysentery and diarrhœa large?—Yes, a great many of those who had emigrated from the Central Provinces succumbed to these diseases during the early part of the famine.

Are the death-rates shown in the returns correct? Did 15 per cent. of the poor-house inmates die?—No, the death-rates given are wrong: 15 per cent of the poor-house inmates did not die as shown in the return. The death-rate in the poor-house was very small.

MR. NARAYEN SINGH BABHUT SINGH, Tahsildar, Amraoti Taluk, Berar, called in and examined.

Mr. Narayen Singh Babhut Singh.

8th Mar. 1898.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

As required by Commissioner's letter No. 763 of 29th January 1898 enclosing Indian Famine Commission Secretary's letter No. 82 of 18th January 1898 and Berar Secretary's letter No. 257 of 25th January 1898, I, Narayen Singh Babhut Singh, Tahsildar of Amraoti Taluk, District Amraoti, Berars, beg to submit the following statement.

As Tahsildar of the Amraoti Taluk I had to supply information to Government regarding the last famine, and was entrusted with direct supervision over some famine works. I was also connected with the following famine relief works, some of them being under my direct supervision:—

(A) Village tank works.

(B) A poor-house.

(C) Six relief centres.

(D) Seven grain shops.

Detailed statements showing the amounts spent and the number of persons relieved and the kind of relief given are given under several heads in the course of my statement.

EXTENT AND SEVERITY OF THE DISTRESS.

In my taluk famine extended over 672 square miles and the population affected was 183, 508 persons.

In my opinion in the last famine this taluk did not suffer so much from failure of crops. The last year's crop may be roughly estimated to be 8 annas in the rupee, and the average crops of ordinary years may be stated as 16 annas in the rupee. The abrupt end of the rains affected the second crops, and field-labour there was none towards the end of the year. There was also a large influx of famine-stricken people from the neighbouring provinces. Distress was chiefly caused by the rise in the prices of the food-grains.

RELIEF WORKS.

Repairs of Tanks.

Details regarding the four tank works done under my direct supervision are:—

No.	Name of village.	Amount expended.	Persons on the work.				Remarks.
			Men.	Women.	Children.	Total.	
		R a. p.					
1	Hartala . .	912 5 3	2,856	5,111	373	8,340	
2	Nawthal . .	836 8 3	2,677	4,83	533	8,041	
3	Borkhadi . .	651 6 0	2,102	4 09	288½	6,459½	
4	Kumagad . .	1,854 5 9	6,125	8,041	963	15,729	
	TOTAL .	4,254 9 3	13,760	22,674	2,135½	38,569½	

The tank works were started on 1st April 1897 and kept up for four months.

TANKS AS RELIEF WORKS.

In my opinion the tank work is the best kind of famine relief work. A very great part of famine relief workers consists of persons who cannot do skilled labour; and tank work affords employment to all such men. Unlike village

tanks, famine roads, if they are to be permanently maintained, require annual expenditure on repairs.

Tank work is besides not so very taxing as road work. A great part of it is earth digging, and is on that account an unobjectionable kind of work for even weakly famine-stricken people. Further, village tanks are of better utility than roads, inasmuch as they, besides serving as water stores for the villagers, are of use to cattle, especially in times of water scarcity.

I have also found that the vicinity of these tanks increases the under-ground flow of water into village wells and also improves the quality of the drinking water.

Payment of Wages Daily or Otherwise.

Section 82 of the Bombay Famine Code prescribes that in the beginning payment should be made to relief workers daily, and after a time twice a week. My personal experience is that daily disbursement is more convenient to the workers. The owners of grain shops opened in the vicinity of relief works are very unwilling to give corn on credit to these workers in these times; and even if they do it, they charge more.

This causes a great deal of hardship to the poor labourers. The disbursing officers on account of the option that is left to them by the section are likely to be tempted to avoid the bother of daily payment. A bi-weekly disbursement creates further complications as regards account keeping. On the whole, from the points of view of both the relief workers and the disbursing officers, I found the daily payment system to be more convenient.

I should therefore suggest that section 82 may be so modified as to make daily payment compulsory.

Holiday for Workers.

Section 85 of Bombay Famine Code provides that in a week there shall be one holiday; no work shall be taken from the workers on that day, but minimum wages paid to them. My suggestion is that the whole holiday should be converted into a half-holiday, and that for a half day's work they should be paid full wages. I found that the minimum wages were too small an amount to procure a day's food supply. The Berar labourers, I believe, will welcome this change, as they are used to half-holiday in a week. The change will also remove the hardship caused to labourers who are allowed the holiday, but refused payment of minimum wages for that day because they have worked only for a day or two in a week.

Water arrangement for Workers.

I also suggest that for every relief work special arrangements should be made for supplying drinking water to workmen. Some persons should be specially appointed to fetch and store drinking water for the whole lot of workers. I do not approve of the practice of allowing labourers to leave their work and go in search of water. If they are allowed to do so, they are likely to use bad water and inconvenience the work by tarrying away. As this point is not made clear in the Bombay Famine Code, I suggest that the necessary addition be made.

Proportion of the Wages of Males and Females.

Section III of the Bombay Famine Code gives a statement of the wages of the various classes of relief workers in terms of the grain equivalents, and the table in Appendix V shows the money value of these grain equivalents. Taking 14lbs. of grain per rupee as the prevailing market rate at a particular time, we get the following comparative statement of the wages of male and female workers as prescribed by the Famine Code:—

Sex.	A.	B.	C.	D.	Minimum.
	a. p.	a. p.	a. p.	a. p.	a. p.
Males	3 0	2 9	2 3	2 0	2 0
Females	2 9	2 5	2 2	1 10	1 10
Difference	0 3	0 4	0 1	0 2	0 2

The above statement shows that there is a difference varying from 1 pie to 4 pies between the wages of a male and a female under each class. This difference between the wages evidently corresponds to the difference between the minimums of food quantities necessary for each sex.

Mr. Narayen Singh Babhut Singh.

8th Mar. 1898.

In ordinary times, when there is sufficient labour for both males and females, the proportion between the wages of a man and of a woman is that of 3 to 2, and at times this proportion rises to 4 to 2, when there is less demand for female hands. The wages differ on account of the different capacities for work of each.

It will therefore be clear that the difference between the rates of wages of the two prevailing in ordinary times is considerably reduced, and the Famine Code rates represent the minimum difference possible.

From the experience I had of the tank relief works I am led to suggest that the difference should not be minimised to the extent of the Famine Code.

My reasons are: I found that on the various tank works female candidates were a great deal in excess of male candidates. I think this may be due to the fact that the minimum wages for a female are a little over what she can get elsewhere, and those for a male are a little below what he can get elsewhere.

Earth-digging is to be done as far as possible by males, and as a consequence females just enough to match the male workers can be retained on a particular work and the remaining female applicants for work have to be sent away. The Famine Code rightly restricts the work of earth-digging to males. Females as a rule I found physically unfit for digging. Besides, when they are put on the work of digging, the outturn of work is not commensurate with the amount spent. Appendix 3 gives the proportion of female earth-carriers to male diggers.

To meet the above inconveniences I suggest that in famine times the proportion of male wages to female wages under each head should be fixed at 5 to 4. The following two comparative statements will show the change in the wages I suggest:—

As prescribed by the Famine Code.

Sex.	A.	B.	C.	D.	Minimum.
	Chattaks.	Chattaks.	Chattaks.	Chattaks.	
Males	21	19	16	14	14
Females	19	17	15	13	13
Total	40	36	31	27	27

As suggested by me.

Sex.	A.	B.	C.	D.	Minimum.
	Chattaks.	Chattaks.	Chattaks.	Chattaks.	
Males	22⅔	20	17⅓	15	15
Females	17⅓	16	13⅓	12*	12*
Total	40	36	31	27	27

* For the D class, however, I think the minimum of 13 chattaks should be maintained.

My suggestion, if accepted, will, besides ensuring a due proportion between males and females on relief works, tend to keep off such female applicants as are not really in need of relief, but are tempted by the higher wages on famine relief works.

Poor-houses.

In the Amraoti District there were three poor-houses maintained at Government cost and conducted in accordance with the regulations of the Famine Relief Code at Karanja, Chandur, and Morsi. But I was not connected with these.

The poor-house at Amraoti was maintained from private subscriptions, to which Government also contributed a small amount. The house was started on the 5th December 1896, and kept put up for eleven months. The total number of persons fed at it was 241,294 The total amount expended was R8,767-9-9. The maximum number of inmates on a day was 2.500. Persons accommodated at this poor-house were mainly from the Mahar, Mang, Gond, Korkus, and such other low castes. The major part of them was from the Central Provinces and the Melghat.

Mr. Narayen Singh Babhut Singh.

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There were a few local Mangs and Mahomedans and professional beggars. In my opinion their number could not have exceeded one-fourth of the total.

The emigrants from other provinces as a rule I found to be considerably emaciated, and they showed unmistakable signs of suffering from starvation and long journey. Some of them had to be put under medical treatment immediately on their admission into the poor-house; and a few of them succumbed before the relief of the poor-house could do them any good. Such of the applicants for admission into the poor-house as appeared to be fit enough to do work were fed for a day and then drafted to relief works; and from among the rest people were sent off on relief works as they showed signs of improvement and ability to work.

No compulsion was used in the matter of sending professional beggars and wanderers in the towns and villages to the poor-house.

A large number of beggars and wanderers get help and relief from private charity. If compulsion is legalized and resorted to and beggars and wanderers forcibly taken to the poor-house, a material source of help from private charity is cut off, and the burden on the poorhouse is unnecessarily increased. I do not therefore advocate compulsory segregation of beggars and wanderers.

I further think that section 119 of the Bombay Famine Code, clause (*b*), should be so amended as to exclude from the poor-houses wanderers and professional beggars who are able to work, but who refuse to work. Beggars and wanderers who are able-bodied and used to manual labour should not be admitted into the poor-houses, but sent to relief works to be taken up as C class workers.

I also think that the inmates of the poor-house should be compelled to stay in the poor-house, and should not be allowed to stray out. This step will ensure the admission of only such persons as need relief from the poor-house, and will keep out persons who can find relief elsewhere.

RELIEF CENTRES.

Relief centres were opened at the following places, and they were maintained from the Indian Charitable Relief Fund, where grain (jawari) was sold at a cheap rate and cooked food distributed to children and destitute persons :—

Name of place.	Number of persons who received cooked food.	Amount expended.	Number of persons who bought at a cheap rate.	Amount expended.	REMARKS.
		R a. p.		R a. p.	
Badnera .	39,879	2,236 15 2	4,188	262 10 4¾	
Nandgaon Peth .	42,559	1,775 14 6	2,618	321 6 0	
Valgaon .	27,284	1,270 10 11½	14,436	164 14 5¾	
Thugaon .	24,942	1,567 8 3	25,380	435 5 3	
Bhatkoli	21,789	902 2 9	15,243	274 6 9	
Kholapur .	25,099	697 9 2	21,944	297 14 1	
Amraoti .	...	...	9,46,644	9,000 0 0	
TOTAL .	181,592	8,450 12 9½	830,453	10,756 8 11¼	

The Amraoti grain shop was opened on 4th April 1897 and closed on 17th November 1897. The others were opened on 22nd April 1897 and closed on 31st October 1897.

At the Amraoti poor-house and as also at the relief centres at other villages cooked food was dealt out at half seer per head. The varieties of the food were—

(1) Bread, consisting of one part of wheat and three parts of jawari.

(2) Khichadi of ground jawari.

(3) Khichadi of rice and mug or tur pulse.

(4) Khichadi of wheat and jawari.

Some vegetable along with the bread and khichadi.

The grain shops were useful for such persons as could not go to the relief works and objected to go to the poor-house, and they were a source of great relief to persons who toiled the whole day, but whose earnings were not sufficient to procure the necessary food at the prevailing high rates.

When the market rate of jawari was 1¾ annas per seer, the relief shops sold jawari at 1¼ annas per seer. The quantity of jawari sold per day to an adult and to a child was 12 chattaks and 6 chattaks respectively. The relief given was thus in money 4½ pies or in jawari 3½ chattaks to an adult and 2¼ pies or 1¾ chattaks to a child. Selection was made by two members of the managing committee with the help of village officers, who issued tickets to eligible applicants.

Loans to cultivators and Landholders.

The following statement will show what State advances were made under the Land Improvement Loans Act and Agriculturists' Loans Act to land-holders and cultivators in my taluk for :—

Nature of advance.	Amount advanced.
	R
(A) Improvement of land	2,825
(B) Cattle	3,270
(C) Cultivation purposes	2,090

My experience warrants me in stating that the amounts were as a rule utilised for the very purposes for which they were borrowed.

The advances made for buying cattle did great benefit to the impoverished cultivators, and I think a larger amount could have been advanced with advantage to them.

The period for the recovery of loans advanced under the Agriculturists' Loans Act was as a rule three years, and that for the recovery of the loans under the Land Improvement Loans Act varied from 3 to 15 years. In fixing this period the ability of the borrowers to repay was taken into account.

I think that this principle of subsistence advances works beneficially, and cultivators seeking such advances should not be driven to find work on the relief works. Such advances, besides improving the land and raising its value and supplying field labour to the needy poor, go to save the agricultural cattle from starvation. As a rule, cultivators who seek Government help in this way do not belong to a class of persons who would go on relief works. In case such help is refused to them they would rather go to other sowcars and mortgage their property than go to relief works.

State advances made under the above Acts are made after due enquiry into the solvency of the borrowers, and there is very little chance of either the principal amounts or their interest turning out to be irrecoverable debts. Therefore Government money thus spent always comes back to Government with interest, while money spent on relief works does not always bring a commensurate return.

Suspensions and Remissions of Land Revenue.

In the Amraoti District famine distress was not found to be so great as to necessitate either suspension or remission of land revenue. I would, however, suggest here that in sections 138 and 140 of the Bombay Famine Code (tentatively in force in Berar) the word "occupants," if it is constructed as not to include "co-sharers" and "tenants" and "actual cultivators," should be made more comprehensive so as to include them.

In my opinion the last famine has not much increased the private indebtedness of the land-owning and cultivating classes of Berar. Distress was chiefly caused by the rise in the prices of the food-grains, and it was not felt so much by the land-owning or cultivating classes as by the labouring classes. It is true the agricultural population of Berar is in a continued state of indebtedness, and from my experience I can state that a large part of the annual yield of crops goes to the sowcars towards payment of their debts. The abnormally high rise in the prices of food-grains brought the cultivators this year a better return in money, and as a result they were to a certain extent fortified to cope with the famine.

In a large number of cases the annual part payment of debt in kind or money to sowcars was withheld from prudential considerations, and thus a provision was made against the impending famine and for future agricultural purposes. On the whole I do not think that there are any reasons to suppose that the indebtedness has increased to any considerable extent.

FOREST.

Mohwa as Food-stuff.

Distress was appreciably reduced by certain concessions made by the Forest authorities. Some forest duties were remitted and some reduced. This year's mango and mohwa yield was not sold by auction as usual. The mohwa fruit was therefore largely used by famine-stricken people as food. In the bazar I often came across a number of mohwa fruit cart-loads which was sold at from 15 to 20 seers a rupee. Poor people make bread out of mohwa fruit with the addition of a little jawari flour.

ORPHANS.

At the end of the famine, after the poor-houses and several relief centres had been closed, I had on my hand about 30 orphans to be disposed of. About five of these were Kunbis and Malis, while the rest were from low castes, such as Mahars, Mangs, Gonds, and Korkus. The Kunbi and Mali orphans were taken up, some by their relatives, and some by the charitably disposed men of their community. But the low caste orphans could not find any patrons from their own castes. I had to hand them over to Christian missionaries.

In case of orphans who have no near relatives, I think efforts should be made to induce people to take them up. And such efforts failing, if any orphans have to be made over to the missionaries or Christians orphanges, payment for the support of such orphans may be made by the State; but there should always be a condition that the orphans be not converted to Christianity, at least for a period of one year.

(*President.*)—You are the Tahsildar of Amraoti?—Yes, sir.

Is your home in Berar?—Yes: our family settled in Berar two or three hundred years ago.

Did you notice many famine-stricken people coming to the Berars from the Central Provinces?—Yes, also from Melghat and some from the North-Western Provinces.

What was done to these people; did they get work?—Some found work in the villages and others on famine relief works and on tank works managed by the Civil Department.

Had you the gang system?—Yes, we worked according to the Bombay Code; we had gangs of 20, 30, 40 or 50, all family gangs.

Did you make new tanks or only repair old ones?—Both.

When did you pay them?—Daily.

Any holidays?—Yes, I gave them half a day's holiday. It gave them time to go to their homes some 5 or 6 miles away. Some grain-dealers however did come to the works and sell the grain to those who remained on the works, at market rates.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—In addition to the works under you, you had the Public Works Department relief works?—No.

Did you regulate the rate of wages of the Public Works Department works?—No.

What grain price did you take into consideration in fixing the rate of wages?—Jowari third class. I gave rates of first, second and third sort of jowari, but the Public Works Department I think took the rate of third class jowari into consideration.

What kind of jowari is your third class jowari?—It is a yellow kind; old jowari.

And so you fixed the wages on the cheapest jowari?—Yes.

There was no other inferior jowari in the market?—No.

Was the proportion of men on the works smaller than that of women and children?—Yes.

Does your statement include non-working children?—No, only the number of working children is given.

Did you admit all who came?—Yes, but we paid nothing to a non-working child or a dependent.

Did you pay Sunday wages?—I paid them in full, but gave them half a day's holiday on the market day afternoon, exacting half a day's more work.

Did you fine them?—Very seldom. The Beraris worked better.

You had more women than men; could the men get employment on the fields?—Yes, some did.

What sort of work?—Some got work on the fields others got private work.

Do you think you had a small number of men because the wages paid to the men and women were almost the same?—Yes, that may be one of the reasons. The minimum wage was 2 annas to a man and 1 anna and 6 pies to a woman when the jowari was 14 lbs. a rupee.

Is 2 annas the rate for a man in the Berars?—No, he usually gets 4 annas; the rates had gone down during the famine.

But women do least work?—Yes, it was not a question of work; the men thought that they were treated badly when there was hardly any appreciable difference between their wages and the wages of the women.

Did the men earn enough to keep themselves up?—Yes.

Did they earn enough to keep their families?—No.

They had their children and wives working?—Yes, but we had to tell the remaining women and children that they were not wanted.

How many poor-houses had you?—One at Amraoti and six at relief centres.

Did you sell cheap food at the relief centres?—Yes.

Who went to the poor-houses?—Mostly people from other districts close by Melghat and the Central Provinces—but about a quarter were however Beraris.

In what month did these outsiders come?—Most of them in May and June.

Any from Betul?—Yes, there may have been some, but we put them all as coming from Melghat.

They came in bad condition?—Yes.

Do they come every year?—Yes, during the rabi season.

This year they came out of season, did they not?—Yes, their season for coming is March.

Did they remain in Berar from March to June or did they return home?—Well, I cannot say, but all those who came to the relief work were in the same condition; very little difference.

Did you give the people at the relief centre any work?—No. They were not obliged to live there; they only got their doles at those centres.

What was the difference between relief centres and poor-houses?—No difference.

You say in your written evidence that at these centres you gave half a seer of cooked food per head; was that sufficient?—Yes, for one meal at a time: a man was fed and then he went away. This was what was dealt out each meal. He had also bread and *kichri* and some vegetable, altogether one meal was more than half a seer of cooked food.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—You say at the end of the famine you had thirty orphans to be disposed of?—Yes, but ten or twelve out of them are dead; the others are still with me.

Were they very much starved?—Yes, when I took charge of them they were emaciated.

How did you treat them?—They were treated at the hospital.

Have you seen any cases of death from starvation?—Yes, specially in the case of those who travelled long distances.

Can you say that they died for want of food?—No, in some cases we found on examining the corpses that they had food with them.

So you cannot say that they died actually for want of food?—No, I can't say that. They were very weak and emaciated.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Didn't you return starvation deaths from your taluka?—Not I; the Police Chief Constable did.

Many died after the rainfall, did they not?—Yes, in June, July and August from damp and exposure; they were suffering from dysentery and diarrhœa.

(*President.*)—Were they all people from the district?—No, many from outside and many from the district.

Mr. Narayen Singh Babhut Singh.

8th Mar. 1898.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—The ten or twelve orphans out of thirty who died under your care must have come in a very bad condition?—Yes.

(*The President.*)—Was the mortality high among the jungle tribes?—The same as among others.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Don't you think cooked food accelerates the death of those who come in a bad condition?—Yes, one day I saw two or three persons dying within a couple of hours after they were fed in the poor-houses.

Had you any difficulty in getting milk?—Yes.

At the Judicial Commissioner's Office, Nagpur.

THIRTIETH DAY.

Wednesday, 9th March 1898.

PRESENT:

SIR J. B. LYALL, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I., (PRESIDENT.)

SURGEON-COLONEL J. RICHARDSON.
MR. T. W. HOLDERNESS, C.S.I.
MR. T. HIGHAM, C.I.E.
RAI BAHADUR B. K. BOSE, C.I.E.
MR. R. H. CRADDOCK, (*Temporary Member for the Central Provinces.*)

MR. H. J. MCINTOSH, *Secretary.*

Mr. A. M. Brigstocke.

9th Mar. 1898.

MR. A. M. BRIGSTOCKE, Officiating Deputy Commissioner, Bhandara, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

A.—DEPARTURES FROM THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES FAMINE CODE, WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES DURING THE RECENT FAMINE.

1. Departures from the principles of the Central Provinces Famine Code occurred under the two heads into which famine-relief measures may be divided, *i. e.*, relief-works and gratuitous relief. These will be dealt with separately.

I.—Relief Works.

2. (*a*) *Task-work versus Piece-work.*—The most important feature of famine administration under this head was the introduction of various forms of "piece-work" *pari passu* with or in substitution of the Code or "task-work" system.

Section 49 of the Central Provinces Famine Code lays down that no famine-relief work shall be done on contract, and in accordance with this principle all works were at first conducted on the task-work-system described in Section 57 *et seq* of the Code, but following the example of the North-Western Provinces with a simplified method of classification whereby Classes A and C were omitted altogether. But with a view (1) to economising the subordinate establishment required for relief works on the task-work system, and (2) to obtaining a better outturn of work from the comparatively large proportion of more or less able-bodied labourers, a system of piece-work under contractors was introduced by the middle of May, and brought into force in this district from the month of June.

The rates were so adjusted as to enable the piece-workers by ordinary diligence to earn the wage prescribed in the Code for B class labourers, the contractors being paid 33 per cent. more to cover the cost of establishment, tools, etc., and profit. Dependents were not paid or fed separately, it being understood that persons in receipt of the B Class wage (or more if they chose to work harder) could support their own non-working children and dependents. Some works were retained on the old task-work system, in order to give employment to weak, inefficient labour to be drafted from the charges on piece-work; and on others where there was no relief-work on the task-work system sufficiently near, infirm gangs, consisting of weak and emaciated labourers and their dependents were maintained on task-work. The piece-work system was not extended to any work where the proportion of inefficient labour was more than 25 per cent.

3. In August the piece-work system was extended to all works, infirm gangs being maintained on task-work as before, but subject to these important modifications that (1) the rates were so reduced as to give the labourer only the D Class or minimum wage for a fair day's work, and (2) the labourer was not allowed to earn more than this wage—this necessitated children and dependents being relieved directly in cash or in kitchens as before—and (3) contractors were to be gradually eliminated, the piece-workers as well as the task-workers being directly supervised and paid by the Officer-in-charge. This payment-by-results system was maintained up to the closing of the works.

4. The question of piece-work *versus* task-work is discussed in paragraphs 132 and 133 of the Report of the Famine Commission of 1880, and in paragraphs 21—26, and 37 and 38 of Mr. Higham's Report. My opinions formed after a consideration of these views and on the experience of the year are as follows:—

(1) The D Class wage is quite sufficient to maintain the workers in health and strength (more especially as the majority of them bring their wives and children to the works), so long as their non-working children and dependents are separately relieved, preferably in a kitchen. Many labourers who had been in receipt of the D Class wage for months saved a considerable portion.

(2) The labourers as a rule are satisfied with the D Class wage and do not care to earn more by extra work, except perhaps professional diggers or stone-breakers, who are very few in number.

(3) The object of Famine-relief being primarily to keep the people alive, while obtaining a fair return for the money spent, there is no advantage in allowing any one to earn more than is sufficient to keep him in health and strength, so long as all those who cannot work are otherwise provided for. Although no doubt more economical, it is not safe to leave the care of children and dependents to labourers on Government relief-works, even if they are being paid at B Class, or even higher rates.

(4) In order to obtain a fair return for the money spent, it is essential that the task should be fixed so as to constitute a fair day's work for a labourer in normal health and strength. All such labourers should be required to perform this task in return for the D Class wage, failure to perform the full task involving a corresponding reduction in wage. Other labourers, *i. e.*, those not in normal health and strength, should be required to perform from 50 to 75 per cent. of the task, but would not be liable for reduction of wage for short work, except occasionally and under restrictions in the case of obstinacy or contumacy, *i. e.*, they would be on ordinary task-work.

5. The separation of the able-bodied and weakly should be made by a Hospital Assistant and would be open to periodical revision.

What I advocate is, in fact, nothing but the payment-by-results system as ultimately introduced into these Provinces. If relief-works are started in time, I see no objection, but the reverse, to the introduction of such a system from the very beginning. Task-work, even when wages are limited to the D Class rate, is undoubtedly demoralizing, and tends

to attract a large number of labourers, who are not really in want, and who do as little as they possibly can for their wage, thus necessitating an elaborate system of fines for short work, which really reduces the system to that of payment-by-results, the alternative method of dealing with contumacious workers described in Section 61 of the Code, *i. e.*, sending them to the poor-house to be kept there on the penal ration, being unworkable in practice and, in my opinion, fallacious in principle. On the other hand, ordinary piece-work, either with or without contractors, under which labourers are able to earn far more than is necessary to keep them and their dependents in health and strength, tends to attract professional labourers who have other means of earning their living and to the rapid exhaustion of the works on the relief programme. The latter objection seems to me to be a very real one, and is not entirely counterbalanced by the undoubted fact that, if the work is one of permanent utility and likely to prove remunerative, it will in the end have been more economically completed by piece-work, as the incidence of establishment and miscellaneous expenses will be less.

6. The proposal to allow able-bodied labourers to earn the B Class wage, or even more, on ordinary piece-work, in order that they may be able to support their womenfolk, children and dependents, seems to me to be open to the objection that unless it is assumed that the whole mass of the relief-workers should be employed only on piece-work—a condition of things which is, I should think, hardly likely to occur in any famine—there would be always some old, weak and emaciated people on the works who would necessarily be relieved on the task-work system, and it would in practice be impossible to ensure that none of those who were nominally dependents on piece-workers were actually admitted as labourers on task-work. Moreover, in the case of children, experience has shown that parents even in receipt of good wages on piece-work could not be trusted to properly support them, and even before the introduction of the "payment-by-results" system it became necessary to admit such children to gratuitous relief in kitchens. It may be that the tendency thus to starve their children was due to the parents, who had formerly been on task-work, having become accustomed to the idea that Government would relieve their children for them; and that this danger would be lessened if the parents were at once put on piece-work and given clearly to understand that the relief of their children rested with them; but judging from the appearance of the children generally throughout the affected tracts—even of those whose parents were in receipt of village relief—I am of opinion that the obligation to maintain dependents, though no doubt universal in times of prosperity, becomes so weakened in times of famine that not much reliance can be placed upon it as a measure of relief.

7. The intervention of contractors between the Government and the labourers is, in my opinion, unnecessary and undesirable. If ordinary piece-work is introduced, no doubt some saving of establishment is secured by giving the work out to a contractor, but the check and supervision over short payments and other malpractices is insufficient, and the labourers have not the same confidence in contract work as they have in Government officials. No doubt many of the contractors employed during the famine worked perfectly honestly, but the temptations were probably too great to be resisted by all. On one work it came to my notice that the contractor, who was being paid at the fixed contract rates, which was supposed to enable the labourers to earn the B Class wage by ordinary diligence, was exacting from them a task quite up to this standard, and was yet only paying them daily wages at the minimum rate and, of course, pocketing the difference. So long as a portion of the labourers have to be kept on task-work, the necessary supervising and professional establishment must be entertained by Government. It is only in the inferior establishment of gang muharrirs, etc., that much increase is necessary if the payment-by-results system is also managed direct by Government.

8. (*b*) *Classification and wages of labourers.*—Under this head a departure from the Code system was made by introducing a simplified classification, in which Classes A and C were omitted and the labourers were practically classified into able-bodied (B Class) and not able-bodied (D Class). The elaborate system contemplated by the Code under which labourers are to be classified according to their antecedents and the nature of the work they have hitherto been engaged in, was found quite unworkable in practice, if indeed it is not based on a fallacy. It does not, in my opinion, seem reasonable to lay down that an able-bodied man accustomed to, say, stone-breaking (*i.e.*, an A Class labourer under the Code) shall, if he performs the full A Class task, say 8 cubic feet, receive the A Class wage, while another equally able-bodied person, but one who is not accustomed to labour (*i.e.*, a Class C labourer) cannot receive more than the C Class wage, even if by unusual exertions he performs a task equal to that of an A Class labourer. The Code, of course, provides that a labourer may be transferred from one Class to another, and this would, no doubt, be done where a gang of labourers classed as C were found to be doing an A Class task. But the advantages of this somewhat cumbersome and slow method of classifying labourers according to their actual capacity for work are not obvious. It seems simpler, as well as more equitable, to classify the workers at once according to their apparent capacity for work, irrespective of their antecedents or previous employment. Moreover, if the principle of putting all the able-bodied on the payment-by-results system and all the weak and emaciated on the task-work system is adopted, and payment is made to all, subject to these conditions, at the minimum or D Class rate, it seems unnecessary to have any classification at all, except the broad one of able-bodied and not able-bodied. This was in fact the system pursued in this district.

9. The question of wages necessarily turns on that of classification. As noted above, able-bodied workers were paid B class wages subject to a reduction to D Class for failure to perform the allotted task; all others were paid D Class wages, the wage paid being according to the Code, but calculated to the nearest pice. When piece-work was introduced, the able-bodied were supposed to be able to earn B Class wages or more if they chose to work hard, but on the introduction of the payment-by-results system all wages were reduced to D Class. Mates and special gangs received 2 pice per day more than the labourers.

10. If the minimum Code wage is sufficient to maintain the individual in health and strength, it is, in my opinion, unnecessary to have a different rate of wage according as the labourer is able-bodied or not, *i.e.*, is on the "payment-by-results" or "task-work" system; nor does it seem necessary to differentiate the wage according to the work on which the labourer is engaged. Ordinarily speaking, all work of a difficult or severe nature would be done by able-bodied gangs, while lighter tasks, such as filling, carrying, etc., would be done by task-work gangs. If necessary men in task-work gangs could also be employed as diggers.

11. The question whether or not the minimum Code wage is sufficient to maintain a labourer in health and strength is partly one of theory and partly of experience. As far as my own observation goes, I am of opinion that it is undoubtedly sufficient, indeed that it is difficult, to induce the labourers to spend the whole of it on their food. Throughout the year there were large numbers of labourers who never received anything but the D wage, yet their condition improved appreciably, and many of them, especially those with families, saved something. Complaints in general terms of the insufficiency of the wage were not, of course, uncommon, but when closely questioned as to their expenditure, the labourers almost invariably failed to account satisfactorily for their pice. If it were possible to do so the case of a single man or woman on the works would no doubt deserve more consideration than that of a whole family, who often (at the 8-seer rate) earned 7 or 8 annas a day; but this is probably not feasible. Moreover, it may generally be assumed that if a man leaves his wife and children at home and comes to the relief-works alone or *vice versâ* (which is more common), those that remain at home have as a rule some other means of livelihood, the proceeds of which go to increase the earnings of the family.

12. But if wages are thus cut down to the lowest possible point, it is, in my opinion, essential that the exact money equivalent of the minimum dry ration should be given. In practice it would, no doubt, be inconvenient to calculate the money equivalent on the current prices of the article composing the ration as provided in Section 86 of the Code, and the assumption that the other items of the ration will vary in price in the same proportion as the staple grain is probably sufficiently safe, more especially in a rice district like this, where the amount spent by the labourers on the grain (rice) is quite out of proportion to their expenditure on the other items. Thus at the 8-seer rate, a labourer in receipt of the D Class wage of 7 pice is assumed to spend one anna only in the purchase of 1lb. of rice and the remaining 3 pice in pulse, salt, ghi, etc., of which it is assumed he will be able to obtain the minimum quantity for three pice or the price of 6 chattaks of rice. But as a matter of fact he probably does not spend more than one pice or perhaps two a day on these other items, either saving the rest or devoting it to the purchase of more rice.

Mr. A. M. Brigstocke.

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13. I am therefore of opinion that the true cash equivalent of 14 chattaks of grain for a man and 13 for a woman is a suitable wage to fix for all relief-workers.

The wage paid should be calculated to the nearest pie, the difficulties of paying fractions of a pice having, in my opinion, been over-estimated. In this district wages were at first paid strictly at Code rates, and it was found that a comparatively small number of pie pieces was quite sufficient. One of the camp officials was deputed to exchange pies for pice; labourers who received one or more pies in part payment of their day's wage waited for one or two days and then brought their pies to this official to be exchanged into pice; or if they belonged to the same family, they brought their pies to be changed into pice at once. Thus the pie pieces were constantly in circulation and a small supply went a long way. The system of calculating the money wage to the nearest pice is undoubtedly liable to press unduly heavily on the workers at some rates. If considered necessary, I would suggest that, as proposed by Mr. Higham, the higher number of pice should be given whenever it exceeds the true wage by 1½ pice or less.

For children between 12 and 16 the adult female wage, equal to the price of 13 chattaks, seems fair; for working children between 7 and 12, the price of 8 chattaks is probably sufficient. Children under seven years of age would not be employed as workers.

14. (*c*) *Sunday holiday.*—The provisions of Section 68 of the Famine Code, which lays down that no work should be permitted on Sunday, and that the labourers should receive for that day the minimum wage, which should b paid to them on Saturday evening, were at first complied with; but subsequently it was directed that work on Sunday should be optional, and that if the labourers chose to take a holiday on that day, they should forfeit their pay. Later on, however, the necessity for a day of rest was reiterated, and in order to prevent an undue increase taking place every Saturday in expectation of receiving an additional day's wages on that day, it was laid down that the additional Sunday wage was to be paid on Saturday only to those who had been continuously employed since the previous Thursday. This system worked well and is not, in my opinion, capable of any improvement. The necessity of an occasional rest, both for the staff and the labourers themselves, is insisted on on grounds of health and sanitation; whether this day should be Sunday or, what the labourers generally prefer, the day on which the nearest bazar is held, is immaterial. No doubt the payment of a wage for a day on which no work is done tends somewhat to demoralize the workers, but if the daily wage is cut down to a mere subsistence wage to the individual, it is evident that some separate provision must be made for Sundays. It has been proposed that the labourers should, by doing something over the allotted task each day, *earn* an extra day's wage by the end of the week, and if this can be practically arranged, there seems no objection to it. But there would always be some who failed to do more than the fixed task each day, and task-workers could not, of course, be expected to do so, so that a portion at least of the workers would have to be paid the extra Sunday wage without having earned it.

15. (*d*) *Residence in Camp.*—The provisions of Section 71 of the Code, which lays down that residence in camp is compulsory for all relief-workers whose home is not within a reasonable distance, were not observed in this district. During the cold and hot weather nothing but a few bamboo mats were provided, and a portion of the workers constructed little shelters for themselves near the works. It was not until the rains that long thatched sheds were built by Government at each camp for the accommodation of the labourers. During the rains the proportion of labourers living in the camp was probably much greater than before, but the majority of them still returned to their homes in the surrounding villages every night, where they were not more than five or six miles off, while many of the others whose homes were at a greater distance camped out in neighbouring villages. No attempt was made to compel the labourers to reside in or near the camp, but it was found quite practicable to insist on all labourers beginning work at the fixed hour, no reduction being made in the task for distance. Late arrivals were not admitted to the work that day, but were entitled, if they seemed in need of it, to a meal in the kitchen under the provisions of Section 54 of the Code, no cash payment being allowed. This procedure constituted a sort of self-acting test, and was invariably followed by punctual attendance on the next day, the labourers from a distance taking up their residence in camp or in one of the neighbouring villages.

16. (*e*) *Kitchens on relief-works.*—It is not quite clear from Chapter IX of the Code whether kitchens on relief works for the relief of all non-working children were contemplated, but in practice this was found to be the only safe and reliable method of relieving such dependents. Cash payments to the parents of non-working children were discontinued, as it was found that the children often presented a half-starved appearance while their parents were in good health. It was found necessary to open a large number of kitchens on each work, so that children whose parents were at work on different sections of the road had not to go too far for their morning and evening meal.

These kitchens were also found to be useful for providing a meal, instead of the cash wage, for new arrivals who were too late to be admitted to the day's work.

Adult dependants of relief-workers were, as a rule, paid the minimum wage in cash, though it was open to them to take food in the kitchen instead. Usually, however, such persons objected to resort to the kitchen on the ground of caste prejudices; in the case of children, however, the kitchens were very popular. I see no objection to giving relief to adult dependents in cash. The Code provides for their receiving the minimum wage of 14 and 13 chattaks for men and women, respectively, while Mr. Higham proposes the value of 11 chattaks only for all adult dependents. I am of opinion that some reduction from the Code minimum wage might be made in the case of dependants, as by the very nature of the case the amount they receive is not intended to be their sole means of support, but is supposed to go to supplement the earnings of the young and robust members of their family. If payments are made in pies, I would propose the money equivalent of 12 and 11 chattaks for men and women, respectively; otherwise the value of 12 chattaks for all.

II.—Gratuitous Relief.

17. Under this head the departures from the principles of the Famine Code were less important. They occurred chiefly in the following measures of relief:—

(*a*) *Village Relief.*—It was found in practice that the village register of poor prescribed by Section 34 of the Code could not be relied upon in the later stages of the famine, and that only by continual inspection and mustering of the inhabitants could the persons really in need of this form of relief be ascertained. In many villages the list prepared at the beginning when scarcity was imminent was blank, there being at the time no such paupers in need of relief, but the obstinacy with which many of the people clung to their homes, and the impossibility of bringing relief works within the reach of all, gradually reduced a large number to a state of extreme weakness and emaciation, when, being absolutely incapable of earning their living, it became necessary to admit them to gratuitous relief. Thus the number of persons in receipt of this form of relief increased steadily up to the end of October.

18. No doubt village relief of this sort is very popular with the people, and care has to be taken that proper check and supervision is exercised; but I do not consider it possible to replace it by any system of kitchens, which can never be popular with adults, while the number that could be properly maintained and supervised would not be sufficient to meet all needs. A grain dole has, in my opinion, no advantages over a money dole, except in cases where direct action towards importation of grain by Government has become necessary. If it is feared that recipients of a cash dole will not exercise sufficient care and foresight and will expend their whole allowance before the end of the period for which it was granted, this objection applies equally to a grain dole, and may be met by making the village headmen responsible for weekly or even daily payments. This system was successfully pursued in some cases. If, on the other hand, it is suggested that persons in receipt of a money dole spend a portion of it on items other than food or in innutritious luxuries, it is equally open to them to do so when they receive their dole in grain, by selling a portion of it or exchanging it for other articles. From my own experience I am of opinion that persons in receipt of village relief in cash can, as a rule, be trusted to make a proper use of it; certainly the recipients improved in a wonderful manner in the course of two or three months.

19. (*b*) *Poor-houses.*—It was found impracticable to send to poor-houses persons who, being fit for employment on works, refuse to go there, nor is it, in my opinion, necessary to provide any such penalty. The only cases which should be taken compulsorily to a poor-house would be of persons wandering aimlessly without visible means of subsistence and who appeared to be in a state of extreme privation. Legal sanction to such a course seems necessary, but it would not,

in my opinion, be necessary to inflict any penalty for refusal to go to a poor-house or escape therefrom, as detention in the poor-house would be quite sufficient. In this connection it may be noted that the suggestion in paragraph 12 of the Poor-house Rules (Appendix IV), that the enclosure should not be so formidable as to resemble a jail, could not be carried out in practice, as nothing but a substantial wall was found sufficient to keep a number of the paupers from escaping.

20. The rules for the management of poor-houses were found deficient in many ways. It was found necessary to entertain a far larger establishment of paid servants, more especially as head cooks, warders and sweepers. The scale of diet prescribed was also found insufficient to restore to health persons suffering from a long course of privation, and meat, fish, additional vegetables and anti-scorbutics were issued from time to time. For hospital patients, who during the closing months of the famine formed a very large proportion of the inmates, special articles of diet were prescribed. The cost of the additional diet was met from funds provided by the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Committee.

21. (*c*) *Other measures of gratuitous relief.*—No special measures were introduced by Government in this district for the relief of weavers or other artizans as provided in Sections 104 and 105 of the Code. The only class who are at all numerous are the weavers or Koshtis, large numbers of whom ultimately found their way on to relief works. It was found impracticable to undertake any extensive measures for relieving these people at their own trade, without producing an outturn of work far in excess of the demand, and thus ultimately causing such a fall in the price of cloth in the local market as must necessarily have caused distress and ruin to other more prosperous weavers who had succeeded in tiding over the period of scarcity. A special demand for cloth, no doubt, sprung up in poor-houses and orphanages where clothing was distributed from charitable funds, and to this extent only production was encouraged by assisting weavers with advances, &c., from charitable funds.

B.—Degree of success which has attended the measures adopted, considered primarily with regard to the relief of distress and the saving of life, and secondarily with regard to economy.

22. Admitting that it is impossible for any imaginable system of Government relief to entirely prevent an increase of mortality during a severe famine, or to completely meet all the various degrees of privation and suffering which are produced thereby, yet the degree of success which has attended the measures adopted can, so far as the saving of life is considered, be only gauged by a consideration of the proportionate increase in the death-rate as compared with normal years. The more obscure and indefinite forms of distress and suffering which are less noticeable, and therefore less easily relieved, may, however, have an almost equally injurious and permanent effect on the population affected by famine, but are not reducible to statistics in the same way as the figures relating to births and deaths, and, therefore, form a more insecure basis for argument or opinion. As far as my own experience goes, however, I am of opinion that when once all measures of relief were fully organized, it was primarily the fault of the people themselves if they underwent any severe distress or suffering. The introduction and organization of all the necessary relief measures no doubt took time, but if when famine once declared itself, all persons feeling the pinch of privation had at once flocked to the relief works which were then open—a by no means impossible feat, assuming that they had only two or three days' food in hand—it is certain that the suffering and mortality which subsequently ensued among those who stayed at home would have been very considerably reduced. No doubt the village relief system ultimately met the case of all such, but it was impossible to introduce so elaborate and far-reaching a scheme all in a moment, and delay was fatal to many. But caste prejudices and an ultra-conservative feeling that forbade many to engage in any unaccustomed form of labour, coupled with an almost incredible apathy as to their ultimate fate, prevented large numbers from seeking relief until it was too late. How far such a state of things can be remedied by a more prompt and extensive introduction of village relief for those who cannot work, and by bringing suitable work nearer the homes of the people to be relieved, will be discussed under the next head.

23. The death-rate for the district during the year 1897 was 60·78 per *mille* against 36·64 in 1896 and 31·94 for the quinquennial period 1891—95, giving an increase in 1897 of about 20,000 deaths over the average. It is exceedingly difficult to state definitely what proportion of these deaths is directly due to privation, but special enquiries made regarding the high mortality during the monsoon months showed, in my opinion, that about 20 per cent. of the total mortality or about 9,000 deaths could be ascribed directly or indirectly to privation. How far the balance of the excess mortality is due to the gradual debilitating effects of a long course of high prices and consequent abstention from accustomed articles of food affecting all classes of the population, it is difficult to say; but in the absence of any unusually injurious climatic conditions, it seems necessary to attribute much of the mortality to this cause.

24. As regards economy, I am not in a position to state how far the cost of the relief works was affected by paying labourers at higher rates than was necessary for their subsistence; but I am of opinion that if all able-bodied labourers are paid by results, with a maximum D wage, a considerable saving would be effected. As regards the relief given to paupers in poor-houses and their homes, I am of opinion that no further economy could be made consistent with bringing all weak and emaciated persons into a fit state of health.

C.—Advice as to the measures and methods of working which seem likely to prove most effective in future in these two respects.

25. The measures and methods which I would advocate for the future may be summarized as follows:—

(*a*) *Relief Works.*—These should be opened as soon as scarcity is imminent, when but a very small proportion of the labourers resorting to them will be inefficient and unable to earn the subsistence wage under the payment-by-results system. Such inefficient labourers would be employed on task-work, receiving the minimum wage; all others would be paid by results, the performance of the full task entitling them to the D class wage. Wages should be paid in money calculated to the nearest pie, being the equivalent of 14 chattaks of grain for a man and 13 for a woman or child between 12 and 16. Children under 12 to receive the value of 8 chattaks. Children under 7 would only receive relief in the shape of cooked food in a kitchen; adult dependents would receive a cash-wage equal to 12 chattaks. A weekly holiday would be observed for which payment would be made at the minimum rate to all labourers who had been on the works for the preceding three days. Residence on the works would be optional, sufficient hutting accommodation being provided; but labourers choosing to live at a great distance from the works would not be excused for late arrival or failure to perform the allotted task.

26. (*b*) *Gratuitous relief.*—Village relief to all unable to earn their living on the relief-works would be introduced simultaneously with the opening of relief works, in order to prevent such persons from wandering and finding their way to relief works which are not suited for them. The Land Record Staff would be at once increased, so as to enable a rapid village to village inspection to be made at once, all the inhabitants being mustered, and those in apparent need of relief being brought on to the relief list. As a rule, children should not be admitted to such relief, it being preferable to start as many kitchens as possible in charge of schoolmasters, police or other responsible officials (private persons being associated with them) where cooked food would be distributed to children only twice a day.

27. Under such circumstances poor-houses would be required only for the temporary accommodation of persons, temporarily or permanently incapable of earning a living, found wandering far from their homes and brought in by the Police, Circle Inspectors or other agency. Such persons would be retained, if only temporarily incapacitated, until they recovered their health, when they would be sent to the nearest relief-work; if permanently incapable of earning a living, they would be sent to their homes with a month's allowance and would then be admitted to the gratuitous relief list.

D.—Other recommendations or opinions thought likely to be useful in future famines.

28. Under this head I have but two recommendations to make, *viz.*, firstly, that too much reliance should not be placed upon test works as a means of gauging whether scarcity exists in any tract or not, and, secondly, that more attempts should be made to employ as large a proportion of the labourers seeking relief on small agricultural works in the vicinity of their villages.

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29. In populous tracts no doubt test works are useful, and probably serve their purpose if they are sufficiently strictly conducted on the payment-by-results system, it being assumed that practically all the labourers will then be able-bodied. But in jungly tracts they do not appeal to the aboriginal tribes, who would hardly have sufficient conviction of finding employment at the test work to go there if any distance from their homes. In such areas the existence of scarcity and distress must be determined from other considerations and employment offered on relief work conditions as soon as this is ascertained.

30. At the same time it is in these tracts that small works near the people's homes are most necessary, as it is impossible to induce them to seek relief at a large work many miles distant. The liberal grants of special famine loans and of loans under the Land Improvement Act made to this district during the recent famine undoubtedly prevented much distress and suffering, and kept down the numbers of persons resorting to the large Public Works Department works, the number of labourers employed by private persons in works started with the help of these loans being at one time in excess of the number employed on large works. It is at least a conceivable hypothesis that if the amount given out in loans had been doubled, there would have been no necessity for large relief-works at all. From the number of applications for loans which had to be rejected for want of funds, and the readiness with which landlords came forward to take up the amounts available, in the consciousness that they were at once improving their estates and keeping their tenants and labourers on the land, I am of opinion that in the event of another famine, employment for practically all those that required it could be found in or near their villages on works of permanent utility. It is, after all, in the first instance only the contraction and the ultimate stoppage of all field labour in times of famine which renders it incumbent on the State to open relief works. If then labour which would ordinarily find emyloyment in the usual agricultural operations could be simply diverted into the cognate spheres of tank-digging, embanking of land and the like, all necessary relief would have been afforded with a minimum of interference with the habits and customs of the people. The private works carried on with the help of loans were, in my experience, conducted by the landlords in almost all cases with perfect honesty and fair dealing with their tenants and labourers, who were able to earn sufficient to support themselves and their dependents.

31. In this district at least there is ample scope for village works of this sort. I would place the whole control of the work in the hands of the malguzar, who would, in my opinion, be quite as likely to manage it as honestly as a contractor or subordinate official. If difficulty were experienced in getting people to take loans, I should be prepared to recommend a larger drawback than that of one-fith which was sanctioned for this district, or even that the cost of the whole work should be defrayed by Government. The construction of tanks in a rice country like this is undoubtedly a real protection against future famines, and would, moreover, lead at the next Settlement to a considerable enhancement of revenue, considering the immense saving of subordinate establishment that would be made—some inspecting agency would, of course, have to be maintained. I am of opinion that such a system of small works would be a very important economy. It is of course true that tanks cannot be constructed *ad infinitum*, and that there is a limit to the profitable embankment of rice land; but it is at least equally true that the number of roads that can be constructed and *maintained* as works of permanent utility is extremely limited, and that a programme which consists entirely of such works is far more likely to be quickly exhausted than one which makes provision for the labourer to be employed at or near their homes. In spite of the large sums spent this year on tank construction and repairs, I am of opinion that in the event of a famine occurring within the next 10 or 15 years there would, in this district, be sufficient scope for the employment of all labour requiring it on works of this sort at or near their homes, and that such a system, if elaborated and introduced in time, would be accompanied by a diminution of all the other measures in relief, and would result in the prevention of much suffering and mortality and ultimate economy to the State.

(*President.*)—How long have you officiated as Deputy Commissioner of Bhandara?—During the whole famine.

What was the state of things in 1895 there?—I think it was a fairly normal year. In 1896 they had a very poor rice harvest, about six to seven-anna one was the estimate.

There is a good deal of land under irrigation in the district?—Yes, about 48 per cent rice.

Tank irrigation?—Yes.

How was it the harvest was so poor in 1896?—A good many of the tanks burst. The rainfall was very extraordinary; first it was very heavy and then stopped altogether. The irrigators let the water off, expecting rain to fall, but it didn't fall. All the land under tank irrigation yielded a very good crop indeed.

There was nothing to alarm you particularly in 1895?—No, I don't think so.

Then the next harvest was very poor?—Yes, much poorer.

When did you begin to be alarmed?—About the end of September 1896. We were still hoping that the rain would fall and save the crops, but it didn't.

Were there many riots and dacoities in the District?—No, only one, got up by a few bad characters.

(*Mr Holderness.*)—When did you begin to open works?—From about the middle of November. We opened two test works at Tumsar and Gondia; in about 10 days they attracted so many that regular works under the Public Works Department were started.

How many works?—One early in December, and four at the end of December.

Had you fresh works after that?—Yes, one on the 6th of February, one on the 6th of May, one on the 14th of May, and one on the 22nd of May.

Why did they increase so in May?—They were more in the nature of overflow works.

Do you think you had as many works at different times as were necessary?—Yes, I think so.

Were the Public Works always able to comply with your requisitions?—Yes, there was only one case where they were not.

When was that?—In May.

Did you open relief centres?—No, not throughout the famine.

When did you begin gratuitous relief?—It was begun in January very gradually. Orders were issued in January, but the numbers did not increase till April or May.

What was the reason?—Partly, I think, the establishment was not sufficient.

You think it should have been started earlier?—I think so.

You say in paragraph 2 of your written note that the rates were so adjusted as to enable the piece-workers by ordinary diligence to earn the wage prescribed in the Code for B class labourers. Did they earn the B class including the Sunday wage?—No, only the B class, they earned nothing on Sundays.

Was there any allowance given for non-working children?—Not at first.

Was the labourer on B class wage supposed to keep dependants?—Yes.

Do you think that was reasonable?—In the case of children it was found it didn't work.

You opened kitchens?—Yes, kitchens were intended for only task-workers, but afterwards orders were issued that children of piece-workers should be admitted to kitchens; we commenced to feed children in July, it was found that they were getting into a bad way and deteriorating.

The piece-work system was not extended to any work where the proportion of inefficient labour was more than 25 per cent.?—It was only started on two works definitely.

Then infirm people were still kept on task-work: was this task-work side by side with piece-work?—Yes, there was no time to introduce piece-work everywhere.

What were the orders you issued?—Piece-work was not to be enforced too severely or suddenly; after the rains failed it was thought better to keep them on task-work.

Then you didn't extend the piece-work system?—No.

In August you had payment-by-results?—Yes.

With contractors?—No, there were contractors under piece-work, and they were gradually turned off.

Do you think contractors desirable?—No, I don't think so.

In the August system the principle was that the able-bodied labourer was not to earn more than the D wage, and if he did not earn it then he was put on to task-work?—Yes.

Did that work well?—It certainly had the result of turning off many able-bodied persons.

Then side by side you had task-work?—Yes, on each work.

(*President.*)—What was the distance of these works from each other?—They were intermingled. It was simply arranged according to the needs of the work that had to be done. The men were drafted on the payment-by-results gang from the task-work gang.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Did the payment-by-results gang generally dwindle down?—Yes, I think so. New-comers went away after a few days.

Did it often happen that men tried to return to task-work?—It was very difficult to prove it.

How did you deal with a family, if fairly able-bodied?—Each was treated according to the class to which they belonged.

A husband might be on piece-work, and the family on task-work?—Yes.

You say in paragraph 4 (1) of your written note that many labourers who had been in receipt of the D class wage for months saved a considerable portion. What evidence have you of that?—When distributing the Charitable Relief Fund I had some cases of cultivators coming and saying that they had saved so much money from relief works, and on enquiry of the amount from which they saved it worked out to the D wage. On enquiring from them personally they never seemed quite able to explain how they spent all their money.

On task-work you had cash allowance and then kitchens?—Yes.

Would you alter the cash allowance into kitchens?—I think it would be better if kitchens had been started in the beginning and no cash allowance given at all. Children improved in kitchens but not when their parents were receiving cash.

(*President.*)—The cash allowance is very small, is it not?—It varied from two pice to one anna according to the rate of grain, nursing mothers received one pice extra for an infant.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—What was the grain equivalent?—Three chattaks.

(*President.*)—The cost of food given in the kitchen was not more than about two pice?—I have not the exact figures. I think it must have worked out to more than that.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—When grain was at seven seers?—Yes.

Apparently your conclusion is that the system of August would be a safe one throughout the famine?—I think so, if started sufficiently early.

What did you observe that the workers bought besides rice?—They purchased a little pulse of some sort. They also had *mahua* and various roots and berries, and so supplemented what they got in that way.

They spent their wages differently to what the Code assumed?—Yes. Paragraph 12 of my note was intended as an answer to the question whether it was necessary to keep up an alternative method.

Suppose instead of giving the labourer a cash wage you gave him the exact constituents of the ration, would he be satisfied?—No.

When the grain is high he gets an advantage in the cash system?—Yes.

If you had this system that you propose, of having able-bodied labourers on D wages, could it be worked satisfactorily on a large scale?—It was worked in practice fairly satisfactorily. If it was introduced in the beginning of a famine, when a large proportion of the people were able-bodied, they would realize that it was the only thing for them to do. They would have to work for their wages.

In paragraph 7 of your written note you refer to contractors. They were not altogether satisfactory?—One man at Bhandara worked well, and the others were petty men.

Did they make gangs as they liked?—Yes, under the piece-work system.

The contractors were left to form the gangs?—Yes.

What was the size of the gang, do you know?—I could hardly say. I think smaller than 90.

Under the family system?—I think so.

Did the contractors ever turn people off the works?—I think they did; complaints were frequent.

Were weavers handed over to contractors?—I think not.

Would you even pay a digger the D wage?—I think so, if it is sufficient to keep him in health and strength.

Is it sufficient?—I think it is sufficient.

On the assumption that he supplements his ration by *mahua*?—I think the money is sufficient in itself.

The digger does the hard work. Would he not rather resent doing the hard work and getting nothing more than the carrier?—I suppose he would, but that need not be considered.

Were the bulk of the workers women throughout the famine?—The percentage was as follows:—35 per cent. women, 27 per cent. men, and 37 per cent. children.

Did it vary from time to time?—Yes, that was the calculation on the grand total for the whole period.

With reference to your remarks in paragraph 13 regarding the payment of fractions of a pice, if you paid the D wage you would have to be as careful as possible?—Yes.

There is no margin really?—No.

As to your remarks in paragraph 14 regarding Sunday holiday, you recommend that the system you finally adopted should continue?—Yes.

That the additional Sunday wage was to be paid on Saturday only to those who had been continuously employed since the previous Thursday?—Yes.

Did you always give Sunday as a day of rest?—Yes.

Did the people go to their homes?—I don't think so; not those living in camp.

Had you bazars on works?—Yes, We had grain contractors on four works during the rains.

Did you regulate the prices?—The arrangement with the contractor was that he should sell the grain at the wholesale prices of the nearest bazar (Gondia). He was allowed 9 per cent. on sales for carriage and private commission.

Did you also examine the quality of the grain supplied?—Yes.

Did you adjust the grain wage at Gondia prices?—Yes.

What was the staple, rice?—Yes, rice.

Did Burma rice sell there?—Almost entirely during the rains.

Was it cheaper than other rice?—Yes.

Which did you take as your standard, country or Burma rice?—Burma rice, or whichever was the cheaper. It was only at the end of the November that people began to produce their stocks of country rice.

Was there any food in the district?—It was proved afterwards that there were available stocks, but that was not then known. Considerable difficulty was experienced by the workers at first.

Did the system of contractors work well?—Yes.

Who were the men?—One was an agent of a large banking firm (Kasturchand), and the other an agent of Jamna Dass, Empress Mills, Nagpur.

I suppose the 9 per cent. they received covered carting expenses?—Yes.

Were there considerable carting expenses at any time?—Yes; during the rains.

You say in paragraph 15 on the subject of residence in camp that the majority of the labourers returned to their homes every night where they were not more than 5 or 6 miles off?—Yes.

Did that interfere with their ability to do the task?—It left them less time for rest in their own houses.

Was the task a full day's task?—I think the task was fixed very reasonably.

During the rains payment-by-results was mostly consolidation?—Yes.

When did the the people begin work?—Seven to eight o'clock in the morning.

When did they break off?—Often at four o'clock.

I suppose they never got any allowance for distance?—No.

Do you think the people objected to live in camp?—I think they preferred going to their villages, if a reasonable distance away.

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How far would they go to live in camp? Would relief work attract people twenty miles away?—Some certainly would go that distance.

Would cultivators?—No, not as a rule. We had no relief works in the Sakuli Tahsil. The nearest work must have been quite 20 miles from the distressed country.

Were the cultivators assisted by loans?—Yes.

Did it do much good?—Yes, a very great deal.

What amounts were advanced under the Land Improvement Act?—Nearly ₹16,000; under Famine Loans ₹2,11,791.

Were these popular?—Yes.

Was much good work done?—Yes.

On the whole it was applied properly?—Yes, a good deal of supervision was exercised over them by Tahsildars.

Has the result been to improve agriculture?—Yes, several tanks were repaired and constructed.

Did you receive returns of labourers employed?—Yes, monthly reports from Patwaris.

What rates did the malguzar pay?—They worked on the petty-contract system.

Did labourers get reasonable prices from landowners?—Yes, I think so.

Was work given to all the people in the village?—Yes, in some instances to the surrounding villages too.

With regard to your remarks in paragraph 17, I understand you had great extension of village relief at the end. What was the reason?—I think because of the modification of the original orders. It was about the end of July; in admitting a person, regard was only to be paid to his appearance.

Did that result in an increase?—A large increase. Before we had been stricter.

(*President.*)—Do you think any persons were prevented from coming to village relief?—I don't think so.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—You say in paragraph 17 that the obstinacy with which many of the people clung to their homes, and the impossiblity of bringing relief-works within the reach of all, gradually reduced a large number to a state of extreme weakness and emaciation. Do you think that could have been prevented by any possible extension of relief measures?—The only possible method that occurs to me is of starting a larger number of small works nearer their homes.

(*President.*)—It has been suggested that there should be two systems of work, one of small works under Civil agency; on these works people should only be admitted under the orders of the village inspecting agency; the people to be admitted should be either weakly people, or cultivators or landowners who have cattle and property which they cannot leave; all other persons to be referred to large works under the Public Works Department. Do you think that system could be organized?—Yes, I think it could; the only difficulty would be to ascertain whether it was necessary for cultivators to remain near their villages or not. They would all wish to come on these small works and not go to any great distance.

It was suggested that very small cultivators who have no cattle or no particular property to look after might be referred to big works, and that other people who had cattle or dependants might get an order to the small works which were not at a distance?—I think that would be workable if the circles were small enough, so that each Circle Inspector might have the proper knowledge.

How large were your circles?—About 200 square miles.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—The thing would have to be worked by the Revenue not the Public Works Department?—Yes.

Could you work it through the malguzar?—I think so, to a certain extent.

Do you think the malguzar might be directed to look after a particular work?—I think so.

I suppose the real difficulty would be in selecting the persons?—Yes.

Under the late system wherever small works had been opened everybody tried to get on to them?—Small works were not opened till large works had been going some time. There was competition to get on to small works.

(*President.*)—Do you think, with reference to the number of cultivators, as distinct from agricultural labourers, that the thing could be simplified by a broad rule that all cultivators should be allowed to go on to small works supposing the wage on small works were lower than on big works?—I think it would be quite possible.

Do you think the cultivators had a reasonable objection to going a distance from their homes, with reference to the necessity of looking after cattle and farms, etc.,—stronger reasons than the labouring class?—I think so, certainly.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Who were the people who ran down to extreme weakness?—Principally the cultivators. They were in a worse state than the labourers.

The cultivators were ultimately put on to gratuitous relief, were they not?—Yes.

You say in paragraph 18 that a grain dole has no advantages over a money dole. Is there not the risk of embezzlement among the village officials?—There were only about two or three cases. One was that of a Kotwal who took one anna from each of the recipients, and there was a case of a malguzar who paid only ₹2 instead of ₹2-4.

Do you think the grain dole is likely to prevent that sort of petty exaction?—It would depend upon the person through whom the grain was distributed. There would be the difficulty also of carting grain about the district.

You paid cash throughout?—Yes.

Were the poor-houses filled?—We had four poor-houses altogether. The total number in them never amounted to 1,000.

Were the inmates your own district men?—There were a good many from Balaghat and there were a few from the Nagpur side.

Was there much wandering in your district?—No; at the beginning there were a certain number returning from the Berars, but they settled on relief works, and then there was very little wandering.

With reference to your remarks in paragraph 21, you did nothing for weavers?—The expenditure was limited to that incurred through the Charitable Relief Fund.

Are the reasons you give for saying that it was found impracticable to undertake any extensive measures for relieving weavers or koshtis theoretical or practical?—I think they are rather based on what I have since heard was done.

Are the weavers (koshtis) very numerous?—In Bhandara they are.

Where do they live?—All over.

They are the only people who would require State relief?—I think so. No doubt the Mahars, some of whom also weave, would prefer to go on weaving also.

(*President.*)—I suppose the Mahars do work at harvest time?—Yes.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Did many come on?—Yes.

Did they complain much?—No, after a time they settled down to it.

Have they gone back to their regular work?—Yes.

You don't think they have drifted from their regular work?—No.

Did they get the D wage?—Yes.

Did they suffer at all?—No, I don't think so. There was no reason to believe it. The mortality did not rise.

You say in paragraph 22 that when once all measures of relief were fully organized, it was primarily the fault of of the people themselves if they underwent any severe distress or suffering?—Yes, but I think village relief should be more extensively and promptly introduced in the earlier stages by increasing the establishment. For a long time we had only 8 Inspectors.

Do you think you should have had more Inspectors?—I think so. It was practically impossible for each Inspector to see all the villages in his inspection. He was supposed to go and visit them in rotation, but he could not get round. Frequently payments were eight or ten days in arrears.

What did the people then do?—The malguzars and mukaddams were told to support them in the meantime.

Were 20 Inspectors sufficient?—I think we should have had more.

Was there any difficulty in getting extra Inspectors?—No. They were promoted Patwaris.

Had you extra famine Tahsildars?—We had two additional Naib-Tahsildars only; they were sanctioned at the end of July.

I suppose it would have been better to extend village relief at the beginning of the rains?—Yes.

You say in paragraph 23 that about 9,000 deaths could be ascribed directly or indirectly to privation. What was the calculation based on?—It was based on special inquiries made in September, October and November. I found that about 20 per cent. of the total mortality could be ascribed to privation.

Did you see many corpses lying about?—No, none.

Were there many starvation deaths returned from the district?—At the beginning there were, but on enquiry it was found impossible to ascertain the true cause of death.

Do you think the people died in their villages from starvation?—I think they must have.

Had the Patwaris orders to relieve cases of extreme privation?—Yes. Pending the arrival of the Inspector the mukaddam was held responsible.

You say in paragraph 28 that test works were not a safe test. Did they mislead you?—That was rather in the nature of a general remark. We had practically no test works. My meaning was that to have opened test works in the jungly parts would not have indicated distress and the people might not have come.

Your scheme is to extend loan operations?—That would meet the case if people could be induced to take up loans; if not, I think the work should be undertaken by Government.

You say the landlords in most cases behaved with perfect honesty and fair dealing with their tenants?—Yes.

You have not noticed if the fields have suffered from want of weeding?—No.

(*Mr. Craddock.*)—Was their not a great diminution in transplanting?—Yes, that was due to the difficulty in obtaining seed. A very large amount was distributed by the Charitable Relief Fund, but many cultivators had not money to purchase it.

(*President.*)—Supposing it was thought desirable to pay workers on relief works in grain instead of in cash, Government providing the grain, do you think there would be any great difficulty in doing it?—No, I don't think so in practice. I do not know whether it would be very unpopular with labourers either.

Apparently it would not attract so many who were not in real need?—Perhaps not; still grain is very easily convertible into money. If they were paid entirely in grain they would have to sell some portion of it to buy other things.

Unless you paid them so many pice for extras?—Yes.

You say in paragraph 5 that task-work, even when wages are limited to the D class rate, is undoubtedly demoralizing and tends to attract a large number of labourers who are not really in want. Is that not rather theory, that they are not really in need of relief in a year when prices have gone up to double the ordinary, and when employment is very scarce, and when previous harvests for one or two years have been unsatisfactory?—Well, I think one could to a certain extent gauge the necessity by their demeanour on relief works. They were always in a threatening attitude and saying, "If you don't pay us more we will go away."

The D wage you recommend as a maximum is about equal to the ration that a man gets in jail who is condemned to simple imprisonment?—I am afraid I don't know. I think myself that the D wage is insufficient to get men back into condition who have become much reduced by privation; but if they had come two or three months earlier it would have been sufficient to keep them in the state they were then in.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Was there much epidemic sickness?—There was a good deal of cholera during May and June.

Were there bowel complaints, dysentery and diarrhœa?—Yes, to a very considerable extent.

Was a large proportion of the mortality due to that?—Yes.

Judging from the mortality you would be inclined to conclude that the people had been insufficiently or unsuitably fed?—Yes.

Were the medical arrangements suitable?—Yes, I think so.

Was there no lack of medical establishment?—Sometimes additional establishments would have been useful.

Is it the duty of the Hospital Assistant to pick out the weakly from others?—Yes.

Was there any lack of medical comforts?—Yes, they were afterwards supplied from the Charitable Relief Fund.

The District Officer went round to see the subordinates?—Yes.

He was not relieved of his duties at headquarters?—No; of course the Hospital Assistant had also charge of poor-houses, so some additional staff was necessary.

What was the maximum number in any one poor-house?—About 500.

You said that those who came on to gratuitous relief were very emaciated?—Yes, that was about August.

When was gratuitous relief first started?—In January.

You say in paragraph 19 that it was found impracticable to send to poor-houses persons, who, being fit for employment on works, refuse to go there, nor is it in your opinion necessary to provide any such penalty. What did you do with these people?—There was not of course any very great number. My remark rather referred to the provision of the Code that says contumacious people should be sent to poor-houses. They were, when possible, sent back to the villages.

With the D wage they didn't fall off?—No.

In your opinion the D wage is sufficient?—Yes.

Could you say to what extent they supplemented the D wage?—I have no definite information, but on going round to relief camps I noticed that they had *mahua* and other things.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—On this system of payment-by-results did you have both road and metalling work?—Yes, it was not introduced till the rains. Mostly consolidation was done.

Was it ramming?—Yes.

One witness said they could not ram?—They did it very badly.

What was the principal work?—Metal breaking and consolidation.

Any earth-work?—No.

At the time that this was introduced harvest operations were on. Did that have the effect of drawing many people off the works?—Yes, certainly, when the system was introduced many people went back to their homes. I am not sure how far it was in consequence of the introduction of the system.

How long was this system going on?—From the beginning of September to the close of the works.

Do you think that system would attract people to works when not in need of relief?—I think it would afford them all the relief necessary.

It was only tried at the time when you felt justified in tightening up?—Yes.

Can you say what the task was upon which piece-work rates were calculated?—No; I'm afraid I cannot. It varied from time to time.

How did it compare with the Code task?—I think each Executive Engineer was rather left to work out the task as experience suggested. It has always been considered that the best test for relief works is that the willing should perform a suitable task. We know that many people will come for a D wage.

What was the exact task you gave them?—I cannot at this moment say. It was fixed on the experience of the previous four or five months.

Can you say what the proportion of those put on this payment-by-results system bore to those on task work?—The proportion varied from time to time. I think about 30 per cent. were on payment-by-results and 70 per cent. on task-work.

What was the size of the payment-by-results gang?—The same size as the task-work gangs.

Then payment was in no case made to individual members of gangs?—Yes, to each individual.

Your numbers consisted of men, women and children. How was it distributed?—Well it involved a certain amount of mental arithmetic. Those who did a full task got a full wage, and those who did only half got half the wage.

If three-fourths was done they were paid three-fourths?—Yes.

Mr. A. M. Brigstocke.

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You are of opinion that this system should be introduced everywhere from the first?—Yes.

It means that no man on the works will ever be able to earn more than the D wage?—Yes.

Two objections occur to that, from the evidence taken elsewhere. If you have earthwork to be done will you get men capable of digging to come and do it for the D wage?—I think they will come rather than starve, especially if the work is sufficiently near.

The man instead of going himself would send his wife?—The man would go unless he had other means of subsistence at home. The woman could not support the whole family.

The second objection is, is the D wage sufficient if you pay it to everyone?—I think so; if the family is really in need of relief they will come in a body and earn enough to support themselves. In Bhandara all the members of a family only earned the D wage all the time.

Had they had an opportunity of earning the B wage?—Some had at the beginning, but not after the payment-by-results system was introduced.

If large works were opened under the Public Works Department to which it was desirable that all the agricultural able-bodied labourers should go, leaving small village works for those who could not leave the village, don't you think it would be desirable on big works to offer a more liberal wage to enable the men to earn more?—Yes, if it was work that was really required to be carried out.

The great difficulty would be to induce persons to go freely there. You might refuse employment on the near works and draft them to distant works. It would be difficult to do it by force. If you allow them to earn higher wages on the distant works, would that not assist you in keeping village works for those for whom it was intended?—Yes, undoubtedly it would. I should be disinclined to offer any inducement of that sort.

Do you think you could get them to come without any inducement?—If they found they could not get it.

In the case of village works they would be carried out by the malguzar?—Yes.

On the piece-work system?—Yes.

Don't you think he would be inclined to employ only those able to do a good task?—Would he employ those unable to leave the village?—I think so. My experience was that the malguzar was very ready to help those who needed work. They recognized that Government was dealing very liberally with them, and they recognized that it was their duty to assist their cultivators and labourers.

They would have tried to get work done by the cheapest agency?—Yes, but still they would have recognized that if any of the cultivators or labourers died of starvation it would be worse for them in the end.

The malguzar would make able-bodied men go to distant works?—I would not propose to make any restriction of that sort. I should have employed even able-bodied men on village works, provided they had land.

Do you think in Bhandara District there was any scope for large tanks to be undertaken by the Public Works Department?—I should doubt it. It was found small tanks were more useful than large ones.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—As regards the malguzar giving employment, is your district very congested, were there too many cultivators?—I don't think so.

As a matter of fact did not the malguzars treat the people very kindly?—Yes; there were exceptions of course. The general body of malguzars treated them very fairly.

Had you tanks mostly?—Yes.

Does not the condition of the country facilitate the digging of tanks?—Yes; a good many of the tanks just consist of one bund on the slope.

What is the area under rice cultivation?—Two-thirds.

During 1895-96, taking the district as a whole, was not the crop a very poor one?—Yes, about 7 annas was my estimate. Subsequently I heard it was pitched too low.

In 1894-95 was it not below one-half?—The figures are given in the Revenue report for the year.

Was there not a great shrinkage in the area in 1895-96?—Yes, very considerable. A decrease of 31,000 acres. It was 841,000 against 872,000 in the previous year.

What was this decrease owing to?—Want of resources, and want of seed grain, and to some extent tenants relinquishing their land.

Do you think that people who did not need relief flocked to your relief works?—Yes, I am of opinion that a certain number did.

Apart from the Mahars, are the great majority of weavers concentrated in large towns?—Yes.

Supposing relief works could have been found, do you think they could have had relief in their own trade?—I think it would be unfair to other traders.

What other traders have you?—There is the brass trade.

Practically there are no artizans besides weavers?—Kasars and others would be entitled to some sort of relief.

Do you know anything of the system adopted by the Charitable Relief Fund?—It was, I think, a success distinctly.

How many families did they relieve?—I have not got the exact figures. It was introduced into Bhandara and other towns.

(*Mr. Craddock.*)—In respect of the Sakoli Tahsil, where you said no relief works were started, was that a portion of your district?—There was one relief work started and a certain number of people flocked to it, but it was a long way from some parts of the Tahsil. In August it was found that a large proportion of the people had stayed at home and deteriorated.

Did you have the forests open?—Yes.

Did the Sakoli zemindars open their forests?—Yes.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—When did you open poor-houses from the Charitable Relief Fund?—As soon as relief works were opened. On the 15th of November there were 175 persons in poor-houses.

The Revd. Dr. J. Sandilands, Missionary, Free Church Mission, Bhandara, called in and examined.

Revd. Dr. J. Sandilands.

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I put in written answers to the Commission's questions.

* 13. I think more might have been done for weavers and Mangs. There are said to be 90,000 weavers in the Bhandara District, and unless for R3,238 paid from the Charitable Fund to some 200 families for work done, there was no special relief devised for this class. So far as Government relief goes, section 105 of the Famine Code, which arranges for the distribution of thread and payment for cloth woven, was a dead letter. Such weavers and Mangs are not able to do a hard day's work, and much distress was consequently felt by them. I do not think this was due to the attitude of the people themselves, but to defective arrangements for the relief of these people. Many of them look strong and well, and yet they cannot do work to please the contractors who look after the piece-work, and so they are rejected here. And inasmuch as they *look* strong, the Hospital Assistants or compounders who examine for task-work also reject them, and so many of these people are altogether unrelieved.

14. I think that if the habits of these classes in ordinary years had been taken into account, some easier way of supporting them might have been devised. I think, too, that some more weight might be given to the opinions of independent non-officials who interest themselves in the matter; and especially, that if independent medical opinion be given that certain people are unable to do piece-work, this opinion should be taken into consideration.

29. I am afraid that gratuitous home relief *does* demoralize the people by making them more ready for the time being at least to accept charity. I do not think, however, that this is a permanent condition. While the famine lasts people who at other times would not dream of asking relief readily beg for it. But this is only natural under the circumstances. When the relief is being

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

stopped, there is a little difficulty, but this too is natural. This difficulty does not last for long, not for more than a week or two. The people, once the prices fall to their normal level, very soon get accustomed to the altered circumstances, and they do not give any further trouble.

103. I am doubtful about the necessity of paying for a rest day. I think, of course, there should be a rest day, one in seven, but from my intercourse with Mr. Lampard, Missionary at Nikum, in the Baihar Tahsil of the Balaghat District, I believe the Government scale of wage, if the people get it properly, is sufficient to allow of enough saving to do without the wage on the rest day. The rest day is, I believe, a necessity both for the working people and the staff which superintends. It allows of relaxation of mind and body, and so increases the quantity and quality of work when it is begun again. It also allows of attention to sanitary considerations, and this is of very great importance, especially in a camp where the labourers are resident.

Mr. Lampard was in charge of a relief camp of 500—600 people. When I visited him in January 1897, the work of digging a tank in a village called Basinkar was going on. Regarding the Sunday wage he told me he did not give it for he had found by experience that it was not necessary. He gave the ordinary Government wage with no Sunday allowance, and certainly his people looked as well and happy as any I have seen on any relief work. He found that the people were able to save with this wage and sometimes when he was out of coppers he was able to get a rupee's worth from individuals working in the camp. It was the consideration that it was unnecessary that made him refrain from giving a Sunday wage.

Perhaps if a rest day's wage is to be given at all it should be confined to very recent arrivals at a camp, and given only in the first week.

Mr. Lampard's experience would seem to indicate that the Government scale of wage is rather high if it is to be considered that each day's wage is mere subsistence wage. His experience is that labourers are able to save sufficient at the least to support themselves without wage on the Sunday rest day. My own experience in Bhandara is the same.

While the relief works were going on it was very difficult to get women for other work and some of the relief workers on piece-work—women—have told me that they were able to earn as much as 4 annas a day, *i.e.*, about four times as much as their ordinary wage.

161. I am afraid it must be said that the knowledge that gratuitous relief is given by the State tends to make the people forget their customary obligations to the poor in general, and not that only but it sometimes happens that even near relatives are left unsupported because of the knowledge that the State will do something for them. In Bhandara when the subscription book for the poor was withdrawn, there was a sum of Rs939 standing as arrears against people who had promised to pay for the support of the poor.

164. Kitchens, I think, would be of use for only small children or low castes, and I do not think that if the distress is real there is any time either at the beginning or at the end of the acute stage when they could be substituted for gratuitous relief in the homes of the people. I do not think that the condition as to residence has much to do with the question.

165. Caste prejudices go against the practice of receiving cooked food in common kitchens. They feel that their caste is broken by doing so and that they become polluted. This is not only because of the food which may have been touched by people of a lower caste but also because of the vessels from which the food has to be eaten. The substitution of kitchens, for gratuitous relief in the form of grain or money would result in the exclusion of all but the lowest castes, or, if any of the higher castes were willing to receive relief in kitchens, it would be only those who have become old and friendless and who have lost their respectability.

166. I do not think it would be practicable—apart from all consideration of caste feeling—to maintain a sufficient number of kitchens, for it would mean that one be kept up in every village. Children's kitchens might do if one were to operate for a small group of villages, but kitchens for the relief of *all* who need relief would require to be established in every village. The old, the sick and the infirm could not possibly be asked to walk from their own village to another for every meal.

167. It was given in the form of money. I think that when grain can be bought readily by the people relief in money is the simpler way. If grain could not easily be got without walking a considerable distance it would then, I think, be better to give the relief in grain. Money on the whole is a simpler method of relief; the distribution can be made more quickly and more cheaply, and the people have the additional pleasure of being able to select their own kind of grain.

168. In most cases it was given in the villages to which the people belonged, but as far as I am aware it was not given in the actual homes of the people.

171. I am not aware that voluntary unofficial agency was in any case utilized in the Bhandara District for the distribution of State relief. There was a proposal by the District Committee of the Charitable Fund that such voluntary agency should be used, but it was negatived by the Deputy Commissioner. I think it would have been of advantage had such voluntary unofficial agency been taken advantage of.

174. Yes; persons of better castes did object to go to the poor-houses, and I do not think that anything save bodily force would have induced many of them to go to poor-houses for relief.

182. It seems to me that there are some cases in which compulsion should be used to detain people in the poor-house, and if legal powers are at present wanting for this, legal powers should be given. I am not quite sure that beggars, wanderers or idlers are the people for whose detention compulsion should be used, but where anyone is so far reduced as to be certified by medical authority to be in danger unless proper care be taken, in such cases, I think, compulsion would be right. All children of tender years would come under this category, and so would parents with children in a badly emaciated condition. I will give two examples. In Tumsar in the month of December 1896 I came upon three little children. A little girl of about six years was just dying and in a few minutes after I first saw her, and while I was engaged in the very act of trying to bring her round, she died. The three children had been in the poor-house, but the eldest, a boy of about 8 or 9 years, not liking the life, took his little sisters away, and in a day or two afterwards I found them in the state indicated lying huddled together in a little chapper. Some compulsion for restraining such children is necessary. They do not know what is good for themselves. The other example I mention happened in Bhandara in or about July 1897. I saw a child, aged one or two years, fearfully emaciated, and about whom I had fears that it would not live more than a day or two. The mother was well conditioned, and it was evident she was not looking after her child, so I called a constable and gave him strict orders to convey mother and child to the Government hospital. I afterwards spoke to the Civil Surgeon about the case, but he said he had been so much bothered about another similar case whom we had both seen on the 22nd June, and had decided on forcibly detaining in hospital, that he was not going to do the same again. For such cases some compulsion is necessary to save lives, and if legal powers be required they should certainly be given.

204. I do not think that subsistence advances are necessary, unless while the cultivator is ploughing his fields or after the seed is sown, and while the cultivator is needing to wait beside his fields to look after them. At all other times I think the ordinary relief works should be sufficient for him.

220. (1) Near relatives (brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts) should be asked if they are willing to receive them. They may even be pressed to take them, but for the sake of the future comfort of the children they should not be forced to take them. If they are forced to take them it may be as bad for the children as if they were being forced on strangers and their lives ever afterwards, until able to look after themselves, be made a burden to them.

(2) Fellow religionists, if of thoroughly respectable character, may have the opportunity of adopting them. A certain time might be fixed during which they would have the opportunity of making applications. Such applicants should be required to *adopt* the children and not merely receive them as *servants*, otherwise it would be difficult to ensure against their being reduced to a kind of slavery.

(3) Charitable societies and Missionary bodies may be asked to receive the children that remain. As far as possible the children should be kept in the same district or neighbourhood, so that when they grow up there may be a greater chance of their working in the same district as they would have been in had the famine not occurred. If a society is willing to take them, Government should give a grant per head of say one-half of the estimated cost of keeping them.

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This should in no case be for a shorter period than 3 or 4 years for the oldest of the children, so as to allow the society time to bring the children up to some useful way of earning their living. With younger children the grant from Government might cease when the children reach the age of 16. In some cases such as where the children are blind or are otherwise defective, so as to make it unlikely they will ever be able to do anything for themselves, a larger grant-in-aid should be given, and it should continue so long as the society can testify that such children are still unable to earn their living.

221. Yes; Government should continue its aid after the famine in the same way as has been suggested above in answer to Question No. 220. When several societies are working in one district and they are all willing after the famine to receive children from Government, preference should be given to such societies as may have given most aid to Government during the famine in caring for the children or otherwise helping the Government in famine work.

222. I think the statement of Object III is ambiguous. The phrase "poor but respectable" is thought by some to include only people belonging to the higher castes, but it seems to me that there may be respectable people in lower castes also, and that all who are in higher castes are not necessarily respectable. The phrase if it remains should be qualified in such way as this "poor but respectable persons of any caste".

Again, if the clause "who will endure any privation rather than take advantage of Government relief" is to be taken literally there will be very few, if any, who will come into this class. During the recent famine I did not come across any who would make any distinction between money that comes from Government sources and money from private and charitable sources. My experience is that in famine times people do not ask *where* money comes from so long as they get it. Had the 21,000 odd people relieved in Bhandara District under Object III been relieved from Government sources, it would have been as acceptable to them as from the Charitable Fund. It is obvious, therefore, that if the statement is to be taken literally it is useless having it read "poor but respectable persons who will endure any privation rather than take advantage of Government relief". All the people relieved would as gladly have taken the money from Government sources as from the Charitable Fund.

Again, it has been my experience that in a famine year there is no one, or almost none, who will endure any privation rather than take relief, when it is known that relief may be had. Even parda women will come out to ask for relief when they know it is being given. I would therefore suggest that for the future the statement of Object III should be worded as follows:—

> "Relieving poor but respectable persons of any caste who, in ordinary years, will endure privation rather than ask relief."

224 and 225. If it is to be considered as an axiom that Government makes itself responsible for the saving of life during a famine, I do not see why the word maintenance should be retained in the statement of Object II at least so far as concerns the currency of famine. Extra comforts required by the children are already included in the statement of Object I, so that it would not need to be mentioned specially in the statement of Object II I would be inclined to let the wording of Object II be as follows:—

> "Providing for the education and maintenance of orphans after the famine is over."

226. I think the best way of preventing overlapping of charitable and Government relief is to give the administration of both into the hands of one individual. I think, too, that where it can be had some voluntary non-official agency should be employed.

If the administration of both forms of relief be in the hands of one individual it is good for two reasons, (1) it would prevent unnecessary overlapping, and (2) it would prevent certain classes being overlooked.

To overlook certain classes is worse even than that the two funds should overlap in their operations. Certain classes in Bhandara which more naturally fell to be relieved from Government funds, were not being relieved sufficiently, and so they were in danger of being passed over. Eventually, however, they were relieved from the Charitable Fund, but this very much increased the number relieved under Object III. It has been thought that the sum of money (R19,150) spent from the Charitable Fund in Bhandara under Object III is excessive, but the reason is that certain classes were not adequately relieved from Government sources and so the Charitable Fund had to make up the deficiency. But if the funds were administered by one individual a more even balance could be held, overlapping on the one hand and deficiency on the other would be prevented.

227. I do not consider there are any, or many, who would not accept gratuitous aid, but all the same I think that cheap grain shops would benefit the people.

230. I think that help should be given either from the Charitable Fund or from Government just before the commencement of the agricultural season, otherwise the ground in many cases will remain fallow.

232. No; I do not think the Charitable Fund could properly be used in relieving people who can get "takavi."

234.—Yes; I think the operations of the Indian Charitable Famine Relief Fund have served useful purposes in saving lives under Object III, in rendering comfortable the lots of thousands under Objects I and II and in giving a new start in life to many under Object IV.

235 and 236 I.—Under Object I, the amount spent in the Bhandara District was R6,150. The number of persons relieved cannot yet be stated, as the returns have not been sent by the Superintendents of the various poor-houses. The money was spent in getting the following things—(1) extra food, (2) milk, (3) cloth, (4) bedding, (5) tobacco, (6) opium, (7) snuff, (8) ganja and (9) shaving charges.

II.—Under Object II it is not known how many children were in all provided for as returns have not come from various Superintendents. The amount spent under this head is said to be R871.

III.—Under Object III, 21,171 persons are said to have been relieved at a cost of R19,150, but it is evident that the number of individuals here given is not correct. Under Object IV, 16,850 persons are said to have been relieved at a cost of R1,31,500.

239. No; I do not think it was right to spend the bulk of the Charitable Fund in helping broken-down agriculturists. In Bhandara R1,31,500 out of R1,57,671, or five-sixths of the whole, were spent on Object IV. This object is no doubt a worthy one in itself, but it seems to me something of a misappropriation of the money (sent chiefly from Britain) to apply it in this way. The people at home, as I understand it, subscribed the money for the starving people of India, being moved by stories from India and engravings of the starving people in the public journals. I do not think they imagined their money would go in the proportion of five-sixths of the whole to set up in life again broken-down agriculturists. This work, I consider, Government should do by giving loans to be refunded gradually. The money sent by the people at home should have been applied more directly in feeding the starving. It may be said it all comes to the same in the end, and this *may* be true, but I think there is a difference. If the people at home give their money for the sake of relieving starvation it is better to apply their money directly in this work and not in the very indirect way of buying seed and bullocks. Otherwise if the generous people at home know that five-sixths of their money was not used in the direct work of feeding the starving, it may be that in a future possible famine they will not be so generous as they have been in the past famine.

241. In the Bhandara District somewhere about 30,374 acres were sown with aid from the Charitable Fund.

270. I am afraid emigration is not a measure that would be popular among the inhabitants of India generally.

299. I think foreign competition and also the competition with Indian Mills has reduced the weaver class to a state of chronic want. To secure a mere subsistence all the members of a family, small as well as great, have to work early and late. Sometimes they are to be found working even as late as 10 P.M.

(*President*).—Were you in the Bhandara District throughout the famine?—I came from home in November 1896. Since then I have been there.

You have been of course in the district before?—Yes. I returned from furlough in November 1896 when the famine was becoming acute.

Do you think it would be necessary to give village weavers relief in their own trade, or do you think it would be sufficient to help the weavers in the towns?—During the famine year I was not in the district much, and cannot speak of the weavers outside the town. I think many of the weavers might be relieved by ordinary task-

work. The difficulty is that sometimes they fall between the two stools. The contractors, knowing that they were not accustomed to it, would not take them on. The compounders who had to examine them thought that they were strong people.

As regards town weavers, do you think that of those who required relief many of them could have been relieved at their own trade?—If such relief had been started they would certainly have been relieved.

Do you think that apart from these cases, the town weavers, as a rule, suffer in health on public works?—So long as they were allowed to do task-work they would not suffer.

They are people accustomed to work in the shade, are they not?—Yes, but the work is not heavy work. They work for long hours, till 10 and 11 o'clock at night.

Do you think that these people when they go on to stone-breaking and have to sit in the sun do not suffer in health?—I cannot say that I saw any harmful results from it.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Are special task-works opened for weavers in connection with the work, under the ordinary task system?—I understand that at the beginning there was special provision for weavers. I heard from the Deputy Commissioner that there was something of that kind, but afterwards a number came to me and said they had been rejected.

They were ready to go to work?—Yes.

You say in answer to Question No. 29 that gratuitous relief does in your opinion demoralize people. Did you notice that yourself?—Yes.

In what way does it?—In the way I have indicated. In the way of making them more ready to ask for it; people who would not have thought of asking for it ordinarily.

When this stopped did they commence to settle down?—Yes, very soon; there was no difficulty for longer than a week or ten days.

In ordinary times there is a good deal of private charity?—Yes.

Has that begun to act again?—I think by this time it has.

I suppose it dried up during the famine?—Yes, practically.

In answer to Question No. 103 you say you think the rest day is necessary?—Yes.

You are doubtful whether the wage is necessary?—Yes. Mr. Lampard said it seemed to him that his people were quite as fit as other people on Government relief works.

Do you happen to know whether Mr. Lampard gave anything extra for dependants?—I cannot say.

Your experience tallied with that?—Yes, so far as I could make enquiries on relief works, they seemed to be very well off.

Was that while the piece-work system was in operation?—Yes.

These women you say did well?—Yes, very well.

They got four times as much as their ordinary wage?—Yes. In some cases they had difficulty in getting stones.

You are aware there was task-work. Do you happen to know whether the fixed wage is sufficient?—I think so.

Do you think the people would save on that fixed wage?—I think so.

As to the men, did they earn much more than the ordinary wage?—There did not happen to be men working at the time. I did not make any particular enquiries about the men.

You did not happen to hear whether the work was attractive to the men?—The husbands of these women were above the labouring class; they were masons and were doing their own particular work.

They sent their women and children?—Yes.

In answer to Question No. 161 you say there was a sum in arrears against the native inhabitants?—Yes.

You gathered that the people were forgetting their obligations?—Yes, they had promised to pay at the beginning and at the end were R939 in arrears.

As regards your answer to Question No. 164, did you see any of the kitchens on relief works?—The kitchens near Bhandara itself.

In connection with relief works?—Yes.

Were they well worked?—So far as I know they were.

You say there is a strong prejudice against kitchens?—I don't say with regard to kitchens only, but with regard to poor-houses also.

Was there some prejudice in the case of children?—I have heard nothing about the children.

Could parents be trusted to feed their children, if they were given an allowance for each?—I think on the whole kitchens are better than giving an allowance.

Do you think you could safely give an allowance and expect them to keep their children?—Not in all cases.

What class of cases?—You could hardly say any class of cases. I think in some cases the ties are very loose.

Were children deserted during the famine?—A considerable number were deserted at Bhandara; there were 300 orphans at one time.

Were these all desertions?—In many cases people had died. I have come across many children who said they had been left by their parents.

Were children offered to you by poor people?—Yes.

In answer to Question No. 167 you say you think relief in money is simpler than in grain?—Yes.

You don't think there is much danger of peculation?—I think there is danger of peculation whether the relief be given as money or as grain.

Do you think people like money better than grain?—Yes.

You say in answer to Question No. 171 that you are not aware that voluntary unofficial agency was in any case utilized in the Bhandara District for the distribution of State relief. I suppose unofficial agency was utilized for the famine fund?—Yes, for the Charitable Relief Fund so far as Objects II and III were concerned. The bulk of the money was distributed by officials under IV. Very little was distributed by non-officials.

You say in your reply to Question No. 182 that legal powers are required to detain people in poor-houses. Were there many cases in which that would have been desirable?—There were other cases besides those I have mentioned.

They wandered about from necessity?—Yes.

Was there a great deal of wandering in the district as far as you saw?—There was much more than is ordinarily the case.

A good deal of begging?—Yes.

Did the people seem to be people from other districts?—Yes, some were.

In reply to Question No. 204 you say that at all other times, except those you mention, you think the ordinary relief works should be sufficient for the cultivator. Did the cultivators show any reluctance to go to relief works?—I don't think so; as far as my experience went they showed no reluctance.

They seemed inclined to go?—I did not find any case where they were disinclined.

Are they disinclined to leave their homes and live on the works?—I think so.

Have the orphans been disposed of yet?—I understand that the majority have been disposed of.

Who have they gone to?—The system was to take them back to the village from which they came and find out who their relatives were and return them. There are some whose relatives cannot be found.

Have these been taken over by Missionary societies?—I think they are still on the hands of Government.

Has your Mission taken over any orphans?—Yes, we have from 60 to 70.

Do you get an allowance for them?—No, not now, only while the famine was going on.

How are you going to bring them up?—That is a question which has not yet been decided upon.

You propose in reply to Question No. 222 a slight verbal alteration in the statement of Object III. You say that in a famine year there is no one, or almost none, who will endure any privation rather than take relief?—That was my experience.

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And yet some died from privation?—But not necessarily because they would not ask for relief. It was not brought when they should have had it.

You say in reply to Questions 224 and 225 that you would be inclined to let the wording of Object II be as follows:—"Providing for the education and maintenance of orphans after the famine is over." Why do you wish to make that alteration?—If it is to be considered an axiom that Government is responsible for the saving of life in a famine and as more comforts for children are included in the statement of Object No. I, there is no reason for Object No. II, unless it is with regard to the disposition of orphans after the famine.

You say in reply to Question No. 226 that certain classes in Bhandara which more naturally fell to be relieved from Government funds, were not being relieved sufficiently, and so they were in danger of being passed over. What classes do you refer to?—The lower classes of people belonging to the mahar caste, mangs and such people. According to the interpretation of some they were not included under Object No. III.

How was it they did not come on to Government relief?—Many were unable to work.

Did not they get gratuitous relief?—Some were not getting gratuitous relief who should have been getting it and were considered unworthy according to the statement of Object No. III, and they were not considered respectable, so were apt to be left out altogether.

In the town?—Yes, and in the surrounding villages 4 miles from the town.

Were they not on gratuitous relief?—No. I don't mean to say that none were on gratuitous relief, but they were not receiving it as they should have, and as I had a good deal to do with the management of the Charitable Relief Fund so far as Object No. III is concerned, when they were not being relieved adequately I thought they should necessarily be put on Object No. III.

Were they put on?—Yes, they were put on.

Might it not have been due to the Inspector thinking that they were capable of work. As regards your remarks in reply to Question No. 227, had you any cheap grain shops?—No, not in Bhandara.

Why do you approve of them?—I heard of their working in Nagpur. I think it was a good thing, but requires a good deal of supervision.

Were they ever considered by the Charitable Relief Fund?—It was never brought forward formally before the Committee.

Were prices run up unreasonably do you think in the town by grain-dealers?—I do not think so. Not to my knowledge.

What advantage would cheap grain shops have been. You would have sold grain at a loss?—Yes. They would have helped the people without pauperising them.

Perhaps they would have had the idea that they were not receiving charity to the same extent that they were?—My experience is that they don't think very much of these things.

They are willing to accept any kind of relief?—Very few are unwilling.

It is quite possible it would be a better way than giving them money while allowing them to get somewhat cheaper food?—Yes, if it were thought giving them money would pauperise them.

You say in answer to Question No. 239 that you don't think it was right to spend the bulk of the Charitable Fund in helping broken-down agriculturists. Had you a discussion on the subject before the Committee?—I did not bring it formally before the Committee.

Don't you think that their objects were promulgated when the Mansion House Fund was raised?—I don't know to what extent, or whether it was realized by the people at home that so much of the money given would be used for Object No. IV.

You think it was beneficial in itself?—Yes.

You had no complaints from subscribers in England?—No.

You say in answer to Question No. 299 that the weaver class is reduced to a state of chronic want. Is that all over the district?—Yes, I think all over.

Are they generally under-fed?—I think so on the whole. They try to make it up by longer hours.

Is that competition with the mills?—Yes.

(*President*).—In regard to orphans, you say that Government should subsidize societies and that the subsidy should be permanent in respect of those orphans who are prevented by infirmity from earning a livelihood for themselves. Would that not be a very unusual thing?—I understand there is a provision of Government for supporting orphan boys until 16 and orphan girls up to 18.

(*Dr. Richardson*).—You say in answer to Question No. 13 that many of the people look strong and well and yet they cannot do work to please the contractors who look after the piece-work, and so they are rejected here. Do you think the medical subordinates were incompetent to judge of the actual condition of the people?—Well, I understand that in many cases they were compounders, and that in famine time many people were put to do medical work who would not do so ordinarily. I know there were people who came and complained in this way.

Is it with reference to these Hospital Assistants and compounders that in answer to the next question you say some more weight might be given to the opinions of independent non-officials who interest themselves in the matter, and especially, that if independent medical opinion is given that certain people are unable to do piece-work this opinion should be taken into consideration. No special instances led you to write this?—There were a number of people who came to me asking for work and I sent them sometimes with letters to the relief works. They would come back afterwards and say they could not get any work. I wrote to Mr. Lugard, the Executive Engineer, asking whether my certificate would not be sufficient. He thought it would not be sufficient. They were Government works, and it was thought necessary to get a certificate from the Civil Surgeon.

As a matter of fact were these people actually denied?—Yes, they said so.

You think there was an objection to outside medical opinion?—Yes. I was told it was more a matter for the Civil Surgeon.

You are a medical man?—Yes, I am.

(*Mr. Bose*).—With reference to your reply to Question No. 161, is it not a fact that local private charity supported four poor-houses in your districts from November 1896 to March 1897?—Yes, liberally.

Is it not a fact that even after the formation of the District Committee of the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund, the people of Bhandara continued to subscribe to the relief of distress caused by the famine?—Yes.

Then how do you say that they withdraw their charity as soon as they know that gratuitous relief is given by the State?—It has that tendency. There was a sum of R939 standing as arrears against people who had promised to pay for the support of the poor.

Do you think that people did do their duty?—At the beginning they did. Once the operations of the Charitable Relief Fund were started, many people did not consider it their duty to continue to subscribe and others allowed their subscriptions to fall into arrears.

With regard to your answer to Question No. 226, did not your District Committee of the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund relieve many people who should have been on the Government relief lists?—Yes.

Was not the District Committee responsible for this state of things in so far as they failed to bring to the notice of Government officers that people who should be relieved from the State Fund were being relieved from the Charity Fund?—I myself brought this state of matters to the notice of responsible Government officials, but Government did not at once take them over.

When the Provincial Committee drew the attention of your Committee to your large expenditure under Object III, did you not curtail your relief under this head and did not Government then take over some of those who were being relieved from the Charity Fund?—Yes.

With regard to your answer to Question No. 239, is it not a fact that the estimates of your District Committee were adequately met, and that you had as much under those heads as you could usefully spend?—Yes.

Is it not a fact that you had a considerable unspent balance out of the last grant for blankets and clothes?—Yes, but I am particularly of opinion that the people at home did not realize that such a large amount would be spent on Object IV.

(*President*).—You think that Government ought to do that sort of thing themselves?—Yes, and that if the people at home sent money out for the people that are starving, I think it would be better if the money were given for that direct purpose.

Don't you think the people at home might be taken aback by the money spent on Nos. 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the articles which you mention in reply to Questions Nos. 235 and 236?—I think it very likely.

(*Mr. Craddock*).—As regards deaths from starvation, I suppose the people could have gone to poor-houses?—Yes, but even among the lowest classes there was a very strong prejudice. *Revd. Dr. J. Sandilands.* *9th Mar. 1898.*

I suppose the mangs had no prejudice?—Even the mangs and mahars had a prejudice against the poor-houses, not of course the same as the higher classes, but still they had it.

Rao Bahadur BAPU RAO DADA, Vice President, Nagpur Municipality, called in and examined. *Rao Bahadur Bapu Rao Dada.* *9th Mar. 1898.*

I put in a written statement of evidence.

I. I am Vice-President of the Nagpur Municipality and Secretary of the Nagpur District Council. I am the managing member in charge of the Octroi department of the Municipality and the Managing Director of the Central Provinces Swadeshi Mills. I was also on the District Committee of the Charitable Relief Branch and on the Poor-house Committee. In these several capacities I had opportunities of watching the extent of distress among the people and the effect of the relief operations undertaken for its alleviation. I was, however, specially connected with the following reliefs in the city, namely :—

(1) The organization of the weaver-relief, and
(2) The opening and working of the cheap grain shop,

and have therefore confined my detailed remarks to these measures of relief, supplementing them with only a few general observations on the other forms of relief introduced by Government.

II. In the City of Nagpur there are not less than 22,000 Koshtis and Momins who depend for their livelihood on weaving. They form one-fifth of the total population of the city. The Koshtis are Hindus and number about 20,000, while the Momins are Muhammadans and are not more than 2,000. The former weave coarse as well as fine cloth, while the latter weave only coarse cloth. This weaver class may be sub-divided into two classes :— Weaver-relief.

(1) *Employers of labour, i.e.*, those who have looms of their own and employ labour, or who engage looms of the labourers and pay them wages for the work turned out by them on the piece-work system.
(2) *The employés, i. e.*, the labourers who work for wages at the customary piece-work rates, with their own looms or with looms of their employers.

III. During the last famine year there was little or no demand for cloth woven in Nagpur in the market, owing to an exceptional combination of adverse circumstances such as was never witnessed before in this century. The prevalence of acute and widespread distress and scarcity in the Province, the abnormal rise in prices of food-grains all over the country, the appearance of plague in the Bombay Presidency and elsewhere, and last though not least, the absence of marriages on account of the year being the "Sinhasta" year, in which marriages do not take place among the Hindus,—all combined to paralyse the trade in cloth and rendered it extremely dull and unremunerative. The result was that cloth became very cheap in the local market and the selling price was even below the cost price. This caused loss to the employers, especially to those who carried on their business on borrowed capital, or whose means were limited, with the result that a large number of looms in the city were stopped, and the majority of the labouring classes were thrown out of employment. The latter thus found it extremely difficult to maintain themselves and their families, and many of them sold their looms and lost everything of value they had. Thousands of them were reduced to the depths of poverty and passed through a life of privation and starvation. Some of them resorted to the ordinary relief-works, where metal-breaking was being done. Being by their training and calling unaccustomed to such hard and rough work, many of them were unable to earn sufficient wages, and had to leave the works and go a-begging in the streets. It was found that metal-breaking had the effect of injuriously affecting the sense of touch in their fingers, which, it was feared, might perhaps render them unfit for weaving in future.

A large majority of the labouring classes were thus quite destitute and unable to keep their body and soul together. It was a piteous sight to witness grim skeleton figures of grown up men and children belonging to this unfortunate class. The ordinary relief works being unsuitable to afford adequate relief to this class, it was considered desirable, though at a very late stage, to find for them such work as they were accustomed to do. The only way to accomplish this was to create a demand for their cloth by purchasing the same on behalf of Government.

IV. The Madras scheme was received for consideration and adoption in order to afford relief to the weavers. But as it was found much too complicated, a simpler system was devised, based on the practice or plan followed here by local cloth dealers.

At the request of Mr. Blenkinsop, the Deputy Commissioner, a scheme for weaver-relief was then drawn up by me with the assistance of my friend Rao Bahadur Bhargo Rao, Judge, Small Cause Court, Nagpur. It was sanctioned by the Chief Commissioner as an experimental measure. It was started at Nagpur on 1st July 1897, and with the sympathetic co-operation of Mr. Nedham, the Commissioner, and Mr. Blenkinsop, the Deputy Commissioner, it has, I am glad to say, worked well, and afforded adequate relief to the distressed weavers. The credit of the successful working of the scheme is due to my friend Rao Bahadur Trimbak Rao, Extra-Assistant Commissioner, who was placed in charge of these relief operations.

A small committee of leading merchants was formed for the management of the shop, with Mr. Trimbak Rao as its Secretary and myself as its President.

V. The relief under the scheme was restricted to such of the labourers from among the weaving class as were really destitute and could not from old age, physical incapacity, or other insuperable difficulty, work at the ordinary relief works, but could easily still work at their looms.

The chief characteristic of the scheme was the employment of the labouring classes through the agency of the middlemen who were their natural and customary employers, and had from time immemorial been recognized as their leaders, and had found work for them, and maintained them.

The agreement between the Government and the middlemen was, that they were to employ only the really destitute labourers to be approved of by the officer in charge of the relief, and to pay them their wages at the customary rate, which is about one-fourth of the whole outlay on the cloth manufactured.

VI. The procedure followed in making advances and appraising the cloth received in adjustment thereof, was briefly as follows :—

The middlemen, desirous of preparing and selling cloth to Government under the scheme, made applications in writing to the Munim of the shop giving the number of looms to be employed, the number and names of work-people to be engaged, the kind and value of cloth to be woven, and the amount of advance required.

On receipt of such applications, the Government Officer in charge of the scheme made personal enquiry on the spot as to the solvency of the applicants in order to prevent men of straw receiving advances, and as to whether the labourers named by them were such as were really in need of Government relief, so as to check the tendency on the part of the middlemen selected to employ their own relations and dependents not requiring any such relief and to take advantage of Government advances which bore no interest, by utilizing them instead of borrowed capital bearing interest.

The Munim of the shop made advances to the middlemen, whose applications were granted to the extent of half the value of the cloth agreed to be supplied, and obtained receipts from them. A pass-book was supplied to

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each middleman in which were entered the names of labourers selected, the number of looms to be opened, the kind of cloth agreed to be sold, and the amount of advance paid. Cloth received from time to time and its value were also entered in this pass-book. The valuation of the cloth received from middlemen was in the first instance made by the Munim with the assistance of a paid appraiser, and then finally settled by the officer in charge in consultation with a committee of experts selected from among the local cloth merchants, from time to time for the purpose. The valuation at which prices were paid by Government was generally in excess of the market price by 1 anna in a rupee, which was allowed in order to give sufficient wages to the work-people and leave a small margin of profit to the middlemen. It was, however, below the normal price of the corresponding period of the year preceding, which had been about 2 annas in a rupee over and above the current market rate which, as stated at the outset, had considerably gone down owing to scarcity and other causes. The value of the cloth as ultimately fixed was credited in adjustment of the advances made from time to time. The cloth purchased at the Government shop at Nagpur consisted of *dhoties, pagris, duptas, tirgonis, lugdas* and *bachkanis* of several kinds used by natives. The average price per piece ranged generally from R2 to R6. The cloth was such as is generally used by people of the middle classes and has a large demand during marriage seasons.

VII. The following table gives the result of the working of the weaver-relief from 1st July 1897, when it was started, till the end of January last.

Month.	Number of middlemen registered.	Number of looms employed.	Number of work-people employed.				Amount of advances made.	Value of cloth received in adjustment of the advances made.	Amount of advance outstanding.	Remarks.
			Men.	Women.	Children.	Total.				
							R	R	R	
July 1897 .	131	400	531	446	558	1,535	4,979	1,198	3,781	The figures given here are as they stood in the accounts at the end of each month. The amount of unadjusted advance outstanding at the end of January has been since recouped, leaving only a balance of about R100.
August „ .	286	867	1,115	888	1,023	3,026	14,560	6,763	7,797	
September „ .	349	1,039	1,330	1,052	1,184	3,566	24,320	15,582	8,738	
October „ .	349	1,039	1,330	1,052	1,184	3,566	29,316	24,760	4,556	
November „ .	177	536	724	563	603	1,890	30,133	29,959	174	
December „ .	39	39	40	35	30	105	30,741	30,299	442	
January 1898 .	36	36	37	34	30	101	30,743	30,313	430	

From the above table it appears that the value of the cloth received was over R30,000 and the amount of advance left unadjusted is not more than R100. The highest number relieved was 3,566 in the months of September and October last. The cost of the establishment was between R140 and R150. The stock was insured against fire. Proper registers and accounts were kept, and the entries therein were regularly checked by the officer in charge and the stock verified from time to time.

VIII. There were few complaints by labourers against middlemen of low or inadequate payment of wages, and whenever such complaints were found reasonable, the officer in charge of the relief made the middlemen pay the labourers their proper remuneration.

IX. Generally speaking, a Koshti has a comparatively large number of mouths to feed, all of whom help him on the loom. The wages allowed to a workman at the customary rate of one-fourth of the outlay cover the remuneration of the members of the family working with him. Roughly speaking, it takes a family consisting of three persons, *i.e.*, a male, a female and a boy, three, four, five or six days to turn out a piece of cloth worth R3, R4, R5 or R6, respectively.

The ordinary wages being at the rate of 4 annas in a rupee worth of cloth, the amount earned by a family of three members would thus fall to be 4 annas per diem, to be distributed as follows :—

2 annas for the male,
1½ do. do. female, and
½ do. do. boy.

In a family consisting of more than three persons, the average earnings were of course still lower. The wages allowed were, in view of the high prices of food-grains, hardly sufficient to give them one full meal a day.

X. Under the orders of Mr. Blenkinsop, my friend Rao Bahadur Trimbak Rao had personally made a local enquiry into eight actual cases selected at random in order to find out whether the wage allowed to the labourer was sufficient and whether the margin of profit left to the middleman was not unduly large. The result of his enquiry is embodied in the following table :—

Serial No.	Name of cloth.	Number of pieces set up on the same loom.	Approximate estimate of the minimum value of the materials used for all the pieces on the loom.			Wages paid to the labourer for all pieces.	Total cost of all pieces.	Cost per piece.	Rate paid by Government per piece.	Present market value per piece.	Normal rate per piece.	Rate of profit left to middleman per piece.	Number of days occupied in setting up and finishing all the pieces on the loom.	Number of persons dependent on the labourer, whether they assist him in the work or get work elsewhere, or are entirely dependent on him.	Rate of wages per diem.	Number of days occupied in setting and finishing one piece.	Remarks.
			Thread.	Silk.	Total.												
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
			℞ a. p.	℞ a. p.	℞ a. p.	℞ a. p.	℞ a. p.	℞ a. p.	℞ a. p.	℞ a. p.	℞ a. p.	℞ a. p	Ms. days.		℞ a. p.	Days.	
1	Lugda, Badli Rasta.	8	12 0 0	12 0 0	24 0 0	10 0 0	34 0 0	4 4 0	4 8 0	4 4 0	5 0 0	0 4 0	1 23	Wife and a son. The latter 5 years old and is entirely dependent. The wife assists and also gets work elsewhere for which she earns 1 anna daily on an average.	0 3 0	6½	The number of days occupied includes the time taken in setting up the loom, which ordinarily ranges between 4 to 8 days.
2	Lugda, Red Khaksi.	5	6 8 0	7 12 0	14 4 0	6 4 0	20 8 0	4 1 7	4 4 0	4 0 0	4 10 0	0 2 5	0 28	Wife and 2 sons. Wife assists. Does not work elsewhere. Sons 5 and 3 years old and are entirely dependent.	0 3 7	5½	
3	Lugda, Red Satki.	5	7 6 0	8 12 0	16 2 0	6 4 0	22 6 0	4 7 7	4 12 0	4 6 0	5 0 0	0 4 5	0 28	Only wife. She assists. Does not work elsewhere.	0 3 7	5½	
4	Tirgoni, Kali Sanjabi.	5½	3 11 0	5 8 0	9 3 0	2 12 0	11 15 0	2 2 8¾	2 4 0	2 2 0	2 6 0	0 1 3¼	0 18	No dependant.	0 3 4	3¼	
5	Dhoti Golkondi.	3	6 10 0	4 8 0	11 2 0	4 8 0	15 10 0	5 3 4	5 8 0	5 4 0	5 12 0	0 4 8	0 22	Mother, wife and 2 daughters, aged 6 and 4 years; dependents. Wife assists and does not work elsewhere. The mother works elsewhere and earns 9 pies daily.	0 3 3	7	
6	Dhoti Sanjabi.	4	4 8 0	6 0 0	10 8 0	3 8 0	14 0 0	3 8 0	3 12 0	3 10 0	4 0 0	0 4 0	0 24	A brother 12 years old, assists. Does not work elsewhere.	0 2 4	6	
7	Turban .	1	1 2 0	Lace 2 0 0	3 2 0	0 14 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	4 4 0	4 0 0	4 8 0	0 4 0	0 8	Wife, a son 10 years old and a girl 11 years old. All assist. Do not work elsewhere.	0 1 9	8	
8	Do. .	1	1 12 0	2 4 0	4 0 0	1 4 0	5 4 0	5 4 0	5 4 0	5 0 0	5 8 0	...	0 8	Wife, 1 son 8 years old, another 3 years old, a daughter 3 years old. The former two assist and do not work elsewhere; the latter two are entirely dependent.	0 1 9	8	

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From the above it will be seen—

(*a*) that there is one labourer for each loom, and he requires at least one woman to assist him in preparing the thread;

(*b*) that the labourer employs member or members of his own family to assist him, and the wage earned by him represents their earnings as well;

(*c*) that the members who can be spared from the loom, work elsewhere and contribute to the earnings of the family;

(*d*) that in the case of a turban which is long, only one piece is, while in the case of others, from 3 to 8 pieces are, put on one loom;

(*e*) that the fewer the number of pieces put on one loom the less the daily wage earned by the labourer;

(*f*) that the trade wage is just sufficient to keep the labourer and his family from starvation, and a little more or less than one-fourth of the whole outlay on the cloth;

(*g*) that the rate of profit or commission left to the middleman is generally below 6¼ per cent., *i. e.*, one anna in a rupee.

It may be noted here that the customary trade wage is, generally speaking, so fixed that a man of ordinary skill and diligence can earn it for the maximum of work turned out by him in a day. Of course it must be more or less according to the diligence and skill of the labourer, and that is the principle on which every piece-work rate is based. The wage being, as stated above, just sufficient to keep him and his family from starvation, he could not as a rule, by making a large number of cloths, earn more than what was necessary for their support in times of acute distress, as it represented his earning on the maximum outturn.

In making the advances to the middlemen the number and kind of cloth (its market value being generally known) were fixed according to the number of labourers and their dependants to be employed, and care was taken that no more cloth is returned than what was sufficient to give the labourer sufficient work and fair remuneration.

XI. A tender has been received to sell the stock in hand on commission at 6 per cent. on the amount of sale-proceeds or purchase it outright at a discount of 3½ annas in a rupee of the value paid to middlemen. This tender has been sent to the Government for orders which have not yet been received.

It may be mentioned here that the original scheme, as submitted by us, provided that sales may go on simultaneously or concurrently with purchases so as to prevent accumulation of stock. But the sales were not allowed by Government. No doubt the sales would have caused some loss and perhaps lessened the market rates, but the bulk of the stock would have been off our hands. Last December was a month in which marriages took place among the Hindus. Towards the end of October there was a prospect of selling the cloth at cost price or even at a small profit. The question of the disposal not being speedily settled and the marriage season having approached and now passed away, that chance was lost and now the tender has been given at a discount. If arrangements were made through the agency of a commission agent for retail and wholesale sales, according to demand at the Nagpur shop and at the fairs elsewhere, I believe there would not be much loss, though it would take some time to dispose of the whole stock. The outright sale at the present time would cause no doubt greater loss, but the loss is much too small as compared with the amount that would have been spent on the relief of such people at the ordinary relief works. In my humble opinion the loss that may be ultimately sustained will be more than compensated by the immense good done to thousands of starving people, many of whom would but for this relief have disappeared from the face of the earth long ago.

XII. This scheme was not an original one, but as stated before simply a systematised adaptation of the plan or practice followed by cloth-dealers in Nagpur. It had consequently this advantage, that it was easily understood by the middlemen and the work-people as they were accustomed to it. When started it was rapidly and largely availed of and worked well and smoothly.

XIII. The Nagpur scheme differed in material particulars from the Madras scheme and had several advantages over it. The former was based on a piece-work system, while the latter on task-work paid by wages. The Madras scheme dealt directly with the labourers and provided for supplying materials to the weavers instead of giving them cash. The Nagpur scheme on the other hand worked through middlemen who were their natural and customary employers and undertook to supply them with materials and make them small payments to be finally adjusted against their wages. The middlemen held themselves responsible for Government advances, and being men of some means, were able to make them good in case of failure to supply cloth of that value. The payment of advances to labourers direct, involved, on the other hand, difficulty of realization and risk of possible loss.

The system of the payment in cash instead of the supply of materials was simpler and more convenient. It obviated the necessity of keeping minute and detailed accounts and close supervision, and there was no fear of Government being deceived by the substitution of inferior stuff for that supplied by it.

A much smaller establishment was required to work the scheme, as all the details were arranged by the middlemen themselves on the piece-work system.

XIV. Besides Nagpur, the weaver-relief was started in Kamptee and Umrer, and a short account of its working at these places may not be out of place here.

Umrer.—The town of Umrer is famous for fine cloth. Its population consists of about 15,000 souls, of whom about 7,000 are Koshtis. The distress among them was very keen owing to the prevalence of scarcity here and plague in the Bombay Presidency, the rise of prices in food-grains and the low prices of their manufactures.

It was absolutely necessary to afford relief to this large class of people, and sanction of Government was obtained to have weaver-relief for Umrer also on the lines of the Nagpur scheme. The relief was started in August 1897, and the scheme was worked successfully on the lines of the Nagpur scheme. There were slight differences of details. No paid appraiser was separately appointed for valuation as at Nagpur, and the appraisement was made by a committee of experts selected from local cloth merchants. The price paid by Government was, generally speaking, equal to the current market price. The Umrer shop was in charge of the Tahsildar of Umrer, assisted by Mr. Balwant Rao, Head Master of the Zilla School, who acted as Secretary.

XV. The following table gives the result of the working of this shop from August last to 15th of February 1898 :—

Month.	Number of looms at work in each month.	Number of persons maintained.				Value of cloth turned out every month.	Amounts of money advanced each month.	Remarks.
		Males.	Females.	Children.	Total.			
						R	R	
August 1897	190	221	195	299	715	104	4.483	The figures are given separately for each month. They do not represent the total at the end of each month.
September „	315	350	292	453	1,095	1,707	9,148	
October „	316	351	291	444	1,086	3.830	1,398	
November „	266	219	246	319	884	3,196	604	
December „	191	213	180	252	645	3,410	483	
January 1898	107	147	131	172	450	1,854	255	
February „	96	137	121	156	414	604	89	
Total	1,481	1,708	1,456	2,125	5,289	14,728	16.371	

From the above statement it seems that the amount advanced by Government is over ₹16,000, and the value of the cloth received is over ₹14,500, leaving about ₹1,500 still unadjusted. The average price per piece ranged between ₹10 to ₹12, as the Umrer cloth is moce valuable than the Nagpur cloth. The cloth in stock is such as is generally purchased by the middle class. I am informed by the Secretary that there will be some difficulty in obtaining cloth for this balance left unadjusted, owing to the stoppage of further advances. The middlemen are unable to get cloth woven by the labourers who have left the place for want of work, leaving behind the materials supplied to them. It is a pity that further advances have been stopped, and in my humble opinion it would be well to make some small advances even now, in order to enable the middlemen to get the cloth manufactured of the value of the advances made. The highest number relieved was 1,095 in September, though on an average about 750 people sought the relief from Government. The Umrer cloth is principally sold in the Nagpur Province and the Bombay Presidency. The prevalence of plague in the latter territory has paralysed the cloth trade of Umrer, and as long as it continues, there is not much chance of the Umrer stock being sold speedily and to advantage.

This is of course a matter for regret, but the scheme is not responsible for it. It would perhaps be better to sell the stock outright even at a discount of, say, 20 per cent. on the value paid for it. The loss of a little over ₹3,000 is not in my opinion much too large when it is remembered that 750 people were supported for about 7 months under the scheme.

Since the closing of the shop I am told some 300 families or about 700 to 800 people have already left the place as owing to prevalence of plague their manufactures have no demand, and the prospects of this unfortunate class of people have not improved in any way.

XVI. *Kamptee.*—At this place the majority of weavers are Muhammadans called Momins, and the minority consists of Hindu Koshtis belonging to the class called Salewars. The weaver-relief started at Kamptee was worked through middlemen on the lines of the Nagpur scheme, with this difference that the poorer middlemen were allowed to work their own looms, with the assistance of their own dependents. They were granted advances, but the head middlemen under whom they worked as jobbers in charge of a certain number of looms, were held responsible for Government money. No paid appraiser was appointed for the valuation of the cloth delivered by the middlemen. It was made by a committee of experts assisted by a paid clerk who served as the storekeeper. The middlemen received value for the cloth delivered by them at the valuation so made. This valuation was generally at the normal rate. The cloth prepared here was coarse and of the kind used by poorer classes, and the average price per piece was from ₹1 to ₹2. All the advances made in Kamptee have been recovered and adjusted.

XVII. The following table gives the result of the working of the scheme in Kamptee:—

Number of looms.	Number of persons employed.				Amount of wages earned by the work-people.	Value paid on the cloth in stock.
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Total.		
					₹	₹
931	963	843	1,382	3,188	7,740	38,702

At Kamptee the middlemen asked for extra commission, maintaining that the prices paid by Government left them no profits at all after paying wages to the work-people and defraying the cost of materials used. But as enquiry showed that the prices paid left a sufficient margin of profit to them, extra commission was accordingly not paid.

The question of disposing of the stock in hand has been engaging the attention of the Deputy Commissioner, and proposals have been made for its sale at the fairs and outstations where it is generally sold in ordinary years. Owing to famine and plague, and perhaps to a possible combination among the possible purchasers, in the hope that the cloth will be ultimately sold cheaper by public auction, the stock has remained unsold. Owing to these adverse circumstances there might be delay in the disposal of the stock, and possibly some loss in the end. But it will be nothing as compared with the amount of good done to over 3,000 people who would have starved but for this relief.

XVIII. In the above I have tried to give a brief history of the scheme, its details and its advantages over the Madras scheme. In my humble opinion the experiment has proved a success beyond all expectations. The only point for regret was that the scheme was not introduced at an earlier stage, as its earlier introduction would have saved thousands of families from privation and destitution. In my humble opinion this scheme is not open to the objection that it interferes with private trade, for the relief is restricted to a limited class of people, *viz.*, the really destitute who are unable to find employment with private traders. There is ample room for private trade. When the private trade fails to give work, then only the Government steps in and supplements it. As soon as it revives, the Government withdraws its aid and gives full play to private enterprise. The only unsatisfactory feature is the accumulation of the stock which might take long for its disposal and cause some loss in the long run. This unfavourable result is, as pointed out before, due to adverse circumstances for which the scheme is not responsible. But even taking it at its worst, the utmost loss that might result would be far less than what would be spent on metal-breaking at the ordinary relief works. The metal broken will also lie undisposed of for years and lakhs of rupees will remain sunk and buried in it.

In future famines, should they unfortunately occur, the weaver-relief should be started along with other reliefs. In my opinion metal-breaking is not at all suited to the weavers, especially the Koshtis. They are not able to turn out as much work as they are paid for at the works, whereas if they are employed at their looms, the work turned out by them is at least worth the money spent on it. The scheme not only thus affords adequate relief to the distressed, but gives an adequate return for the outlay. I would strongly recommend this aspect of the question for favourable consideration.

XIX. *Grain shop.*—In the early part of April last, I, as a member of the District Committee of the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund, made a proposal to the Committee to open a shop or shops for retail sale of food-grains to poor people, who, though not utterly destitute, were passing through much privation owing to the very high prices then ruling in the market and with their slender means were finding it extremely difficult to live even a hand-to-mouth life. My proposal was to advance the capital from the Charitable Fund, to be recouped subsequently by sale-proceeds of grain sold. For want of sufficient funds at the disposal of the District Committee it was resolved to invite tenders from merchants to open shop or shops with their own capital, for sale of grain to poor people selected by the Committee, the loss occasioned by selling cheap being made good out of the Charitable Fund. In response to this call, some of the members of the District Committee and leading merchants of the city formed a Company with a capital of ₹21,000, to be invested in the purchase of food-grain, and made an offer to open a shop for the purpose of selling grain to selected persons at cheap rates below the cost price. The condition was that the loss occasioned by such sales and by the ultimate winding up of the business would be made good by the Committee, and the Company on their part agreed not to charge any interest on the capital, or make any profit in the business. On 24th April last the Committee accepted the offer and fixed the extent of the loss to be indemnified from time to time according to the requirements of each month.

XX. A small Executive Committee was then appointed by the Company for the management of the business. I was nominated its Secretary, and Lakhmichand and Chogmall, shareholders, as working members in charge of the shop. The shop was opened on the 5th of May 1897. The doors of the shop were open at all hours of the day from 7 A.M. to 8 or 9 P.M. The daily attendance on Wednesdays and Sundays, being the bazar days, ranged between 1,000 to 1,400, and on other days between 800 to 1,200 persons. Only persons holding passes (called *A* and *B* passes) issued under the orders of the District Committee had admittance. *A* passes were granted to those poor but respectable people, including *parda nashin* women of high family, who would rather starve and die than go out for alms or attend poor-houses or relief works; and B passes to those families of poor but respectable people whose average income per head was ₹18 or less per annum.

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The scale of allowance fixed for *A* and *B* passes was as follows:—

		Grain worth. Per mensem. *R a. p.*
A Pass	(*a*) When the family consists of only one adult person, for such person	1 8 0
	(*b*) When the family consists of more than one adult person, for every such person	1 0 0
	(*c*) For every child or person below 12 years of age in a family	0 8 0
B Pass	(*a*) For every adult member of the family	2 0 0
	(*b*) For every child or person below 12 years	1 0 0

with a maximum of R15 for each family.

The *A* pass-holders got grain free of cost, which was borne by the District Committee, and *B* pass-holders got it cheap for ready cash at reduced rates, to the extent of the value allowed in their respective passes. Rice or wheat, or both, was sold according to the requirements of the purchasers. As a rule sales were not allowed at one time for less than 4 annas worth of grain and more than one-fourth of the value allowed in the pass. This enabled the poor people to get the provisions according to their means and as often as they liked, and the working members to arrange to have sufficient stock in hand and regulate the sales according to requirements. The selling rates were fixed by the Executive Committee from time to time, and were generally above the market rates by 1 to 1¼ seers for a rupee worth of grain sold. Special care was taken that full measure of good and clean grain was given to the purchasers.

The following arrangements were made at the shop for regulating the sales to the people:—

To avoid confusion and inconvenience, separate apartments were set apart for female and male purchasers. For each apartment, Register-writers, Pass-writers and Checkers were appointed according to requirements. Any person holding either *A* or *B* pass and intending to purchase grain, presented his pass to the Register-writer and asked him for the kind and quantity of grain wanted by him and tendered him the price. The writer, after satisfying himself of the genuineness of the pass, accepted the price of the quantity if within the limit allowed in the pass and sold him the grain according to his requirements. He then entered in his register the name of the ticket-holder, the quantity and kind of grain sold, and the amount received, etc., and made over the pass to the Pass-writer who sat by him. The Pass-writer returned the pass to the holder after entering in it the kind and quantity of grain sold and the amount paid.

The holder then took it to the Checker who was in charge of the heaps of grain exposed for sale close by. The grain was then measured out to him by the measurer appointed for the purpose, in the presence of the Checker who tickeq off the entry in the pass to prevent grain being issued more than once for the same payment, and saw that the correct quantity was measured out. He also saw that full measure of good and clean grain was delivered.

The whole process of presentation of the pass, its scrutiny, the necessary entries in the register and in the pass, the payment of the price and the delivery of the grain, did not occupy more than a few minutes. So that, speaking generally, no person was detained longer than what it took him to buy grain at an ordinary stall on a busy market day. At the opening of the shop every day, bags of grain were given in charge of the Checker, who at the close of the day rendered an account of the same, and the balance in his hand was measured and verified.

Similarly, the Register-writer accounted for the sale-proceeds, the amount being checked with the entries in the register, and was responsible to make good deficiency if any. The daily collections were counted by the Munim of the shop in the presence of the working member, who was also the Treasurer. The Munim wrote Cash-book and Ledger, checked invoices and relieved the writers for their meals. Either of the two working members was always present at the shop and regulated the sales.

The Secretary visited the shop at least once a day, checked the accounts and signed the entries therein. At the end of the month the stock in hand was verified and increase or decrease duly entered and adjusted in the books. A statement was prepared showing the monthly purchases and sales, the stock left and the loss incurred by cheap sales at the end of the month.

This statement was verified by the Secretary, and, when passed by the Executive Committee, was sent to the District Committee for payment. The District Committee then recouped the loss within the guaranteed limit, which was never exceeded.

XXI.—The following table gives the result of the working of the shop during the months it was open :—

Month.	Wheat sold.			Rice sold.			Value of grain sold.	Number of persons relieved at R2 per head.	Loss on account of			Total loss recouped.	Remarks.
	Kind.	Value.	Average rate per rupee in seers.	Kind.	Value.	Average rate per rupee in seers.			A Pass.	B Pass.	Establishment charges.		
		R			R		R		R	R	R	R	
May 1897 . .	Gaorani (grown in the district).	995	9½	Rangoon, from Calcutta.	1,211	9¼	2,206	1,103	175	70	71	316	
June „ . .	Do.	10,585	9½	Do. and Sambalpur.	9,422	9¼	20,007	10,003	1,076	1,027	112	2,215	
July „ . .	Badaghat, from Raipur and Nandgaon.	12,482	9¼	Rangoon, from Calcutta.	19,787	8¾	32,269	16,135	852	2,985	174	4,011	
August „ . .	Do.	13,860	8¾	Do. .	18,588	8¾	32,448	16,224	820	2,728	206	3,754	
September „ . .	Pisoo, from Seoni.	12,515	9½	Rangoon and Sambalpur.	14,876	9	27,391	13,695	(a) 519	2,298	161	2,978	(a) The decrease is due to the opening of a grain shop in the Saddar Bazar, for sake of convenience, in September and October.
October „ . .	From Delhi and Amritsar.	12,507	9¾	Do. .	16,152	10¾	28,659	14,329	(a) 525	3,208	180	3,913	
November „ . .	Do.	10,036	9¾	Do. .	17,006	11½	27,042	13,521	935	2,690	166	3,791	
	Total .	72,980	...	...	97,042	...	1,70,022	85,010	4,902	15,006	1,070	20,978	

Note.—This does not include the loss in winding up of the business, which was about R850.

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From the above it will be seen that Rangoon rice which was got from Calcutta was mostly purchased by the people as it was cheaper and cleaner than the country rice. During the months of October and November last it was found advantageous to import wheat from Delhi and Amritsar, as it sold slightly cheaper and was somewhat better than the Badaghat wheat grown in Chhattisgarh. The total value of the grain sold was R1,70,000 in round numbers, and the loss incurred by cheap sales amounted to about R21,000, or an average at little less than 2 annas per rupee worth of grain sold. The percentage of loss was thus very small compared with the extent of relief afforded to the people.

The two Marwari brothers—Lakhmichand and Chogmall—made such nice arrangements on business principles for purchase of grain, that on the evening of the 30th November when the shop was closed under the orders of the District Committee, not a seer of either rice or wheat remained in stock. No loss was thus incurred in the winding up of the business on account of fluctuations in prices of food-grains. The only articles in stock were the empty bags and some furniture, etc., all of which was easily sold, and the loss of winding up the shop did not in the end amount to more than R850.

It may be mentioned here that out of the subscribed capital R21,000 only R16,100 were called and paid up, and with this amount, supplemented now and then with their own money, the two Marwari brothers were able to manage the business for seven months. Much credit is due to their untiring zeal, their indefatigable energy and their mercantile tact and foresight. The whole of the paid-up capital has been paid back to the shareholders and all the accounts have been settled.

XXII. The opening of the shop supplied a long-felt want in the relief operations of the district. It did an immense amount of good, and went a great way to alleviate the miseries and distress of the poor but respectable people. It restored confidence among the people and in my humble opinion prevented in a great measure the repetition of the disastrous grain riots of September 1896, by showing them that the authorities were doing all that lay in their power to help them out of their present difficulties. During my daily visits to the shop I heard hundreds of people blessing the "Sarkar" and expressing their gratitude for the inestimable boon conferred on them in times of great distress. When the intention of the District Committee to close the shop from the 1st December 1897 was made known, many people expressed their fears that they would thenceforward be at the mercy of the petty, unscrupulous and too selfish bania, who would force up the prices irrespective of the actual state of the general market. As a matter of fact it was found on two or three occasions when the shop was closed on account of holidays, that the retail sellers at once raised the rates on those days to the great inconvenience of the poor people. The shop was considered as a guide in determining the rates in the market and acted as a good check on the greed of the petty dealer.

As already stated the difference between the shop rate and the retail rate current in the market was generally speaking 1 to 1½ seers per rupee worth of grain. This meant to the purchaser a gain of 2 to 2½ annas for every rupee worth of grain purchased by him. Besides, at the shop the purchaser got full measure of clean grain, while the petty bania in the market attempted by sharp practices to give him short measure of grain, mixed with particles of sand, *bhusa* and other inferior stuff, causing him thereby a loss of about ¾ to 1 seer, worth about 1½ to 2 annas, for every rupee worth of grain purchased in the market. This saving to the poor purchaser, though not considerable, was a great boon. It enabled him to maintain himself and his dependents for a longer period and with more ease than otherwise. In other words, it was a great relief to the poor in these times of distress.

XXIII. In the city of Nagpur grain trade is in the hands of Kachhis and Marwaris. The Kachhi comes here from the Bombay Presidency in November and carries on trade in grain till the end of May or June, when he winds up his business and goes back to his native country. Then the Marwari, who is a permanent resident of the place, takes his place and supplies the market with grain during the monsoons. The Kachhis and Marwaris are wholesale vendors who sell grain to the Kirad, the Teli, the Pardeshi, and a variety of other class of people. They charge generally ½ seer for their profit for every rupee worth of grain to the retail purchaser. The retail seller in his turn sells at ½ a seer less per rupee, and the unscrupulous and the too selfish among his class attempt to make more profit by giving short measure and grain mixed with inferior stuff.

In ordinary times the resources of the Kachhis and the Marwaris are quite equal to supply the demand of the market, and the sharp practices referred to above are not carried on on any large scale. It may be mentioned here that generally speaking the Kachhi is satisfied with a small margin of profit, while the Marwari and the petty bania try to make as much profit as they possibly can by means fair or foul. During the monsoon of 1896, when there was a sudden rise in prices all over the country, the Marwari and the petty bania who then controlled the grain trade here raised their prices in consequence of the high prices ruling elsewhere although they had cheap grain in store. The malpractices of the dishonest and selfish also grew in proportion with the rise in prices. The result was a widespread panic among the poor people who thought that the bania was taking undue advantage of their necessities.

The poor people demanded of the bania to sell them tolerably good stuff at a reasonable profit, taking the cost price of the goods in store with him into consideration. The bania was naturally unwilling to comply with the demand, as he was able to make more profit by exporting grain to other parts of the country. The banias fearing that they might perhaps be forced either by the authorities or by an infuriated mob to sell at prices lower than those prevailing elsewhere, which was not to their advantage, accordingly closed their shops to the public. The poor people, especially the Koshtis, who were living a hand-to-mouth life, had no means to obtain their daily provision. This produced a widespread discontent and distress, and among other causes led, in my opinion, to the regrettable grain riots of September 1896, which resulted in the looting of grain stores of the Marwaris and the petty bania, causing great loss to the latter.

XXIV. The occurrence of grain riots showed to my mind that in times of acute and widespread scarcity the conscience of the petty bania being pliable, was not to be trusted in the matter of supplying grain at fair prices to the distressed poor, and a relief to them in that direction was a great desideratum. Being convinced of the paramount necessity and importance of a shop where the poorest of the poor could easily get tolerably good stuff at reasonably fair prices, I made a proposal to the Municipal Committee of Nagpur to open such a shop on behalf of the Municipality. The Municipal Committee in their Resolution II of 25th October 1896, resolved to apply to Government for permission to open a shop for sale of grain to the poor people at fair rates so as to check the arbitrary enhancement of prices by local grain-dealers. In forwarding the Resolution to Government for sanction, it was stated:—"In order that the business thus to be started might be carried on on strictly mercantile principles and to minimise as much as possible the contingency of loss, it is intended to associate with the Committee some respectable traders, and to start the shop in consultation and in concert, if not in partnership, with them. It is believed that the opening of a Municipal shop will tend to counteract, to a certain extent, the regrettable policy of some too selfish banias to enhance unduly the prices of grain prevailing in the city, irrespective of the actual state of the general market. This step is also likely to have a quieting effect on the disturbed minds of the people and show them that the authorities have done and are doing all that lies in their power to afford them suitable relief in their present distressed condition." The proposal was however negatived by Government on the following grounds:—"It is the settled policy of Government, in times of scarcity and famine, to permit no interference by its officers with the ordinary operations of trade, experience having long since proved that such interference instead of being advantageous to the poor is mischievous in its effects. The natural and necessary result of the prevalence of high prices in any place is to lead to importation to that place from others, where lower rates prevail, and thus the resources of one part of the country are used to supplement deficiencies in another. If the local authorities, however, artificially lower the prices below the rate at which the competition of the market would fix them, the flow of importation will be checked and supplies will thus continue to fall short of the demand." These orders were received in the early part of December 1896.

XXV. The principle of regulating the demand and supply as enunciated in the above extract, is no doubt ordinarily true as applicable to ordinary times, and interference with trade would under ordinary circumstances do more harm than good.

But in the exceptional circumstances, such as scarcity and famine, the rule of non-interference may, in my humble opinion, at least in some cases, be relaxed subject to certain restrictions and limitations. The truth of this remark is amply proved by the experiment and the successful result of the cheap grain shop opened at Nagpur. A shop or shops supplying a limited quantity of grain to a specified number of people on the lines of the Nagpur shop would not produce such a serious interference with trade as to check "the flow of importation" and cause the supplies to "fall short of the demand," there being no competition with other traders by under-selling them. It is of course evident that such a shop would divert a portion of the trade from other merchants, but its extent being limited, no appreciable effect would be produced on the state of the general market. It would only break up the monopoly among the unscrupulous and give full play for fair and honest trade. This may be illustrated by the two instances which occurred in the city of Nagpur itself.

Nagpur has a population of over a lakh of persons. The traders here supply grain not only to the whole population of the city and its suburbs, but also to the villages within a radius of 10 miles. The total number of people relieved by the cheap grain shop did not exceed 16,500 persons in any one month. Private trade had thus still more than sufficient custom, which left a sufficiently large scope for private business, and there was no room for any reasonable complaint on the part of the bania. The shop merely relieved the congestion by opening a small outlet for the poor people.

It may not be out of place to mention here another instance. It is the case of the two Marwari brothers who were so useful in launching the charitable grain shop and carrying it on to success. Soon after the grain riots of September 1896 these Marwaris had on their own account opened a shop for sale of jowari at slightly lower rates to the poorest of the poor. The sale continued for October and November 1896.

The shop was then closed as the prices became slightly easier in December following. They suffered by these cheap sales a loss of about ₹1,200 in two months. The only limitation or restriction put by them was that the maximum quantity saleable to a particular person at one time was 4 annas worth of grain. This afforded substantial relief to the poorest of the poor in their distressed condition, and did not in any way injuriously affect the trade of the place.

If then the Government takes the place of a philanthropic trader and makes arrangements for supplying the wants of a limited number of helpless and poor people, there cannot exist, in my opinion, any reasonable ground for complaint on the part of the private trade, especially as the object of Government is not to supplant but to supplement private enterprize. Moreover, in giving agricultural loans, the Government itself has set an example and proved that the rule of non-interference may with advantage be relaxed under certain circumstances. It cannot be denied that the agricultural loans or takavi advances divert, to some extent, the business of private trade, but the loss is so small as not to be felt, while the good it has done to the agricultural community is not small. The position of Government opening a grain shop for a time as a measure of relief will be much the same as that taken by it in regard to agricultural loans or takavi advances, with this great difference however that in the former case it is temporary, while in the latter practically permanent.

It will thus be seen that the temporary opening of grain shops is open to less objection than the system of takavi advances or agricultural loans, as far as its effect on private trade is concerned.

One result of opening cheap grain shops has been, at least in some places, to prevent fitful rise of price of food-grains, and then to steady the market. Against this it is urged that the number of persons engaged in grain trade is so large, and their operations extend over so wide an area, that a combination with a view to keep up prices beyond what is warranted by the law of supply and demand is not possible. It may be so, taking the country as a whole. Up to a certain point the prices generally are, no doubt, regulated by the above law. But in many towns and villages the grain trade is practically in the hands of a limited number of persons, and it is not at all a difficult matter for them to sink their private differences and enter into a sort of informal compact or understanding not to sell below a certain price.

In any case this is what practically happens. One of the leading traders raises his price and the others immediately follow his example. Such a combination might be liable to be broken by an outsider. But except in the case of a few very large towns the matter will not be generally known or at least take some time to be known, and even when known, an outsider not enjoying local knowledge and not possessing local facilities will not readily enter into competition with the local men.

Even as it is, it will take him some time to open a new market for his goods, especially in the face of local opposition which, from the very circumstances of the case, will be very strong. Thus the local men will be left unfettered, and will be able to arrange matters in their own way at least for some time. This actually happened in many places and that the rates were fictitious rates and not the natural result of the law of supply and demand was clearly demonstrated by the fall in prices as soon as persons ready and willing to bear the loss appeared in the field and began to sell at cheaper rates through the agency of cheap grain shops referred to by me.

Again, it is said that the interference of Government with the flow of private trade would dislocate that trade as private dealers would withdraw from the field in the face of such a formidable rival as the Government with its unlimited resources. But matters can certainly be so arranged that the public at large need know nothing as to the source whence the person selling grain at cheap rates got his capital from.

Again if further safeguards are necessary, they may be introduced in the shape of rules providing that the grain would be sold only to selected persons and up to a certain fixed quantity, the persons and the quantity being fixed by a committee specially appointed for the purpose, or by the Local Municipality if any exist. Experience has clearly shown that this is a matter which presents no practical difficulty.

When there is a famine over a large part of the country, the ordinary rules are, as it were, suspended and, as stated before, it is permissible to adopt the measures which would not be justifiable at ordinary times. Famine with its exceptional circumstances demands exceptional treatment, as the Government itself by the introduction of widespread relief operations admits. These operations are to a certain extent in derogation of the ordinary rules which regulate employment of labour. Loans on more favourable terms than obtainable at the ordinary money-market are also to a certain extent a departure from the rule of absolute abstention from interference with private business. For by giving loans on easier terms on a large scale the Government trenches on the field of operations of ordinary money-lenders. It has never been asserted that this leads to the withdrawal of a single person from the business. Again, a considerable number of those who will be assisted through the cheap grain shops will, if not so assisted, ultimately fall into such a state of destitution as will necessitate their being relieved gratuitously or by being sent to the relief works. This will be a state far from desirable.

For the above reasons I venture to think the opening of a cheap grain shop by Government is not open to any economic or political objection, and I would strongly recommend that in future famines, should they unfortunately occur, Government ought to open cheap grain shops in certain localities for the relief of the really distressed people on the principle of limited demand and supply, as explained before, and experience would, I am sure, show that the arrangement would secure a maximum of good to the people with a minimum of expense to the exchequer.

Large and small works.

XXVI. The relief works opened by Government generally provided for breaking of gitty. In a few instances earthwork was allowed, and a few roads were taken in hand as famine works in this district. All these works were managed by the Public Works Department. The District Council of Nagpur set apart some funds for famine works and asked the Deputy Commissioner, Nagpur, to have large works done through the Public Works Department, and in their Resolution, dated 1st November 1896, suggested the following scheme for small works for consideration of Government:—

(*a*) That tanks, wells and other works of sanitary and agricultural improvement be divided into two classes—

(1) special works which would benefit a particular village or locality owned by a private individual; and

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(2) general works which would be useful to the public at large.

(*b*) That in respect to class (1), loans be freely advanced by Government to malguzars and proprietors without interest on favourable terms, to enable them to carry out such works, and in regard to class (2) the Government be pleased to undertake these works at the cost of the State, and take advantage of the supervision of respectable malguzars and village people whose services should be freely utilized.

It was further remarked that the improvement of tanks and wells if undertaken through the agency of malguzars and village people would tend greatly to the relief of the tenants and labourers, especially in the rice-growing tracts, and that if the village agency were freely used the work would be carried on more economically and limited to certain and manageable localities instead of being spread over large areas.

As far as I know Government did make some advances to malguzars but not on a sufficiently large scale in this district. As to small works, I think they were not carried out either through Government or through private agency as suggested above, and this was in my opinion a drawback in the scheme of relief operations. I am in favour of large tanks and wells especially in rice-growing tracts being undertaken as famine works, as they tend to prevent to a certain extent failure of crops owing to deficiency of water.

Village relief.

XXVII. There was next to no village relief in this district until the latter part of October last. The result was a fearful mortality.

My experience of village economy is that the bulk of the people in the village, especially the labourers, live even in ordinary years a hand-to-mouth life, and that their condition in times of acute distress is much worse, and relief to them is more necessary than ever.

I would strongly recommend that village relief be undertaken as soon as other relief works are opened, as it will save thousands of lives and afford relief to a really destitute and helpless class of people.

(*President*).—You are Vice-President of the Nagpur Municipality?—Yes.

And Secretary of the Nagpur District Council?—Yes.

Is your home in Nagpur?—Yes, I was born in Nagpur.

You are Managing Director of the Swadeshi Mills?—Yes, they are cotton spinning mills.

Weaving too?—No.

Do your ordinary hands come from the weaving class to any large extent?—They come from the low Mahar class who weave coarse cloth.

Who used to do the thread spinning work?—The weavers themselves with members of their own families; now they buy it.

That helped them to make a livelihood?—Yes; now some get employment in the mills.

The Mahars also do agriculture in the fields, do they not?—Yes, if they have fields. Generally in villages the Mahars do the coarse cloth weaving.

(*Mr. Bose*).—In your written note of evidence you have not shown what has been the total cost to Government of the special relief to weavers?—R31,927-13-6.

Shortly R32,000 was the amount spent?—Yes.

You estimate that R24,000 will be realized by the sale?—Yes.

Resulting in a loss of about R8,000?—Yes.

What is the system proposed as regards the sale of stock?—There are two proposals—(1) to sell the whole stock outright at a discount, and (2) retail sale through a commission agent who will get 6 per cent. for the whole of the cloth.

You think under the second, if adopted, the loss would be considerably less? Do you think the accumulation of stock under the special system of relief likely to dislocate the cloth market in the future and thus injuriously affect the trade of the very people who have been relieved?—I don't think so, because the quantity of cloth turned out is far below the demand of ordinary years, and although in famine times there is a suspension of the demand, still when better times return there will be a greater demand. I do not think there will be any fear of stock overstocking the market. As regards the accumulation of stock in Nagpur, I think with the return of better times there will be a greater demand. It is also hoped that there will be a greater demand in the Bombay Presidency with the disappearance of the plague.

As regards the quantity of cloth which you turned out, is that below the ordinary outturn?—Yes, Government did not permit weavers to turn out more cloth than was absolutely necessary for a bare subsistence; besides it should be remembered that a number of people had left the place.

On the return of prosperity you consider there will be a demand?—Yes, a greater demand than ever, because whenever people have money they will buy cloth.

So you think there is no room for apprehension that the market will be flooded?—No.

Did the weavers make any cloth for the Charitable Relief Fund?—Yes, of the total amount of Rs. 3,881.

Did the success of the scheme under the Charitable Relief Fund lead to its adoption by Government?—Yes.

(*President*).—Don't you think more might be spent in that way from the Charitable Relief Fund for the people on works and poor-houses?—Yes, but probably the supply would be more than the demand, that is, there might be an accumulation. Besides, the cloth is generally intended for the middle classes, while the cloth for the relief camps is of a coarser kind.

Could not that be made?—Yes, but it does not pay.

(*Mr. Bose*).—Almost the whole of the grant for cloth from the Charitable Relief Fund was spent in that way?—Yes.

If more money had been allotted could you have got more cloth?—Yes, there was ample room.

Had you any trouble in your dealings with the weavers? Did any of them fail to act up to their engagements?—We had no trouble of any kind, and not a single man tried to defraud us or failed to deliver the cloth. The whole thing was done satisfactorily; of course care was taken to advance money to good middlemen.

(*Mr. Holderness*).—If weavers had been similarly relieved in other parts of India in this way, and stocks everywhere accumulated, do you think there would be great difficulty in disposing of them?—I don't think so. It would have been a question of time.

One argument is that if you do it on a large scale everywhere you accumulate stocks and injure the independent weavers. What do you think of that?—I don't think that argument is quite sound. It might at first, but with the return of better times such difficulties would disappear.

There might be a period when the effect of having large stock might depress the market?—Yes. Of course the poor people would sell it to the wholesale vendors, and they would sell it at advantageous rates later on at a favourable opportunity, at fairs, etc. In the long run there is no difficulty.

What do you mean by a long run?—It is difficult to say. One or two months perhaps.

Under this system they merely got their customary cash wage?—Yes.

So they were earning just as much under this system as in good times?—Not necessarily. It would depend upon the value of cloth in the market. Moreover, dearness of food grains rendered such earning insufficient or barely sufficient.

Apparently a family of three would earn from three to four annas?—Yes.

Would that be less than on relief works?—It might be equal.

There is no alteration which you would propose if you had to do it over again?—No. That is the system that is being adopted every day, and I cannot think of any alteration at present.

(*Mr. Bose*).—You say one result of opening cheap grain shops has been, at least in some places, to prevent fitful rise of price of food-grains and then to steady the market?—Yes, I refer to retail sales in the weekly markets.

Did not these rates change from day to day?—Yes, and even from hour to hour.

Do you think that was reasonable?—No.

How were these changes brought about?—I have explained that prices were rising in other parts of the country and the wholesale vendors of course raised their prices accordingly. The retail vendors also, knowing it would be difficult to get grain elsewhere, raised their rates also, irrespective of the actual state of the local market.

Apart from these rates, was it not a fact that the people complained of the quality of the grain?—Yes.

And also about the short measure?—Yes.

Do you think the opening of the shop had any effect on this?—Yes, I think so. The people could show that good grain was to be had elsewhere at a cheaper rate.

Was it not also the impression abroad that if the retail sellers did not deal fairly with their customers, the people would be entitled to apply for grain at the cheap grain shops?—Yes.

And so the sellers might lose their custom?—Yes. That guided them in not raising their rates too high.

Did the opening of your cheap grain shops stop imports in any way by ordinary grain-dealers?—Not in the least.

(*Mr. Holderness*).—This shop was run by the District Committee?—Yes.

And the loss was recouped by the Committee?—Yes.

The District Committee selected the pass-holders?—Yes.

(A) pass-holders included *parda-nashins*?—Yes.

They got the grain for nothing?—Yes.

And the B for reduced rates?—Yes.

How were the B selected?—If the average income per head of the family was R18 *per annum* or less, they were entitled to the B pass.

Was this extended only to the city?—Yes.

Would you have any objection to establishing grain shops all over the district or should it be confined to towns?—In the country it would be very difficult to organize. It had better be confined to towns.

Then the people in the country would not get the benefit of the grain shops?—Still it would be better to get something done. It was my idea to get cheap grain shops all over, but for want of funds and information this was not done. I believe people in the mofussil require it as much if not more than those in the towns. If it could be done it would afford them greater relief.

Suppose Government had done it on a large scale, would that not have had some effect on the grain trade?—It should not be done indiscriminately.

How would Government have got its grain?—Purchase it in the market like other wholesale vendors.

It would be able to purchase cheaply?—Yes.

Were not retail prices based on wholesale prices?—There was always a difference. The difficulty was that the retail seller tried to give less to a poor person. Besides if Government or some other responsible authority sold the grain there would be good stuff sold in proper measure.

You don't think an extensive operation like this on the part of Government would prevent the trade from importing grain?—No.

You don't think there is much objection to Government coming openly forward?—I don't think so.

(*Mr. Bose*).—It is not necessary for your system that Government itself should work the shop?—No. The only essential condition is that the loss must be recouped by Government. I would prefer the management being given to private persons who deal in grain trade rather than to Government servants.

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(*Mr. Holderness*).—Government would have to select the people?—I think many charitable persons would come forward.

(*President*).—Did you see anything of relief works outside the town?—I have been on relief camps for distribution of cloth. The people were clad in rags and some were skeletons.

Do you think there would be any advantage if Government paid persons on relief works in grain instead of in cash?—I have not considered the question. Probably it would have been more convenient to have given it in grain, but probably inconvenient for Government to store up grain.

(*Mr. Bose*).—When you went to relief works did you make any inquiries as to wages, etc.?—Yes, as far as I could ascertain. The typical family would consist of the husband, wife, son and perhaps an old father and mother.

What was the wage which your family of five persons would receive?—A man would receive R0-1-9, a woman R0-1-6 and a working child R0-1-0, a small child R0-0-6. They would require about 3 seers at least, so that 8 pies would be left for their expenses.

That would not be sufficient, would it? They would have to curtail their expenses?—The wage was not sufficient.

(*Mr. Holderness*).—I understand that five persons would earn 5 annas?—Yes, they would probably earn about that amount.

(*Mr. Bose*).—What did you observe when you went to distribute the clothes?—The great majority of the relief workers were in very poor circumstances and clad in rags. The system we adopted was to go without notice, so that they could not conceal any clothes they may have had. Our difficulty lay not in selecting deserving objects but in deciding whom to refuse; we gave as much as we could and we could have given very much more.

You have had largely to do with Municipal and District Fund work. What is the usual rate of wages in the town of Nagpur and in other towns in the district?—Three annas for a man, 1 anna 6 pies for a woman.

You are a landholder and employ agricultural labour in your home farm. Can you give the rate of wages in the case of agricultural and other labourers in the villages?—An agricultural servant gets 56 seers of jowari per mensem; a male day labourer gets two seers per day, a woman one seer.

You don't pay your monthly servants anything besides grain?—We pay R2 a year for clothes besides.

(*President*).—Did banias give credit to a large extent?—Some did now and then.

I suppose that would prevent poor people going to the cheap grain shops. They would not like to lose their credit?—Yes, if they had no money they would go to the bania, but if they had money they would go to the cheap grain shop.

They might think we have money now, but may not have to-morrow?—They would buy at both places according to convenience.

NOTE.—(*a*) Nagpur cloth has been since sold for about R27,500, causing a loss of R4,500 only.

(*b*) Umrer cloth has been since disposed of for about R12,000, resulting in a loss of about R4,500.

(*c*) Kamptee cloth has been sold since for about Rs9,000, the loss amounting to about R9,700.

MR. W. A. NEDHAM, Officiating Commissioner, Nagpur Division, called in and examined.

Mr. W. A. Nedham.

9th Mar. 1898.

I put in a written statement of evidence and written answers to the Commission's questions.

A.—DEPARTURES FROM THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES FAMINE CODE, WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES DURING THE RECENT FAMINE.

The main departure was the introduction of piece-work.

In minor details also there was some departure, *e.g.*, classification of workers, where out of the four classes mentioned in Article 52 of the Code, Classes A and C were omitted altogether, as explained in paragraphs 14 and 15 of Public Works Department General Order No. C-498. And with regard to adjustment of rates, Article 60 of the Code provides that this shall be done by the Officer-in-charge, but by paragraph 31 of above-quoted General Order, this was done by the Sub-Divisional Officer in consultation with the Deputy Commissioner, and except in case of urgent necessity, which was immediately reported, wage rates were not changed without sanction of the Commissioner.

Also with regard to Article 68, the nearest local market day was generally substituted for Sunday as the day of rest.

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The introduction of piece-work was fully justified by experience, for with task-work alone it was found difficult to enforce a full task when people came crowding to a newly opened work.

The task-work system also proved an expensive form of relief-work, as dependants had to be paid separately, and all workers could earn the minimum wage, however little work they got through.

Moreover the ordinary objections to piece-work were met by task work for weakly persons being always provided close at hand. Further remarks and suggestions about the best way of carrying out piece-work will be found later on under heading C.

B.—DEGREE OF SUCCESS WHICH HAS ATTENDED THE MEASURES ADOPTED, CONSIDERED PRIMARILY WITH REGARD TO THE RELIEF OF DISTRESS AND SAVING OF LIFE, AND SECONDARILY WITH REGARD TO ECONOMY.

The chief measures of relief were relief-works, which consisted principally of excavating and repairing tanks and wells, stone breaking and road making, and relief to weavers in their own trade.

Also gratuitous relief, chiefly in the following forms, *viz.*:—Poor-houses, village-relief under Section 34 to people in their own homes, kitchens, relief-centres, relief to respectable men and women (Sections 100 and 103), and to starving wanderers through the Police and cheap grain shops.

Tank works.

With regard to works, probably the most useful, as resulting in permanent agricultural improvement, were tank works. In ryotwari tracts these were effected at Government expense, but the majority of such works were carried out by private individuals with ordinary takavi and famine loans, and were, I consider, the most economical and effective method of employing labour.

Where there was the most scope for such improvements, *e.g.*, the Chanda District, it obviated the necessity of starting more elaborate and costly works under Public Works Department supervision. The only drawback is that such work cannot be continued during the rainy season, and the result was that village relief had to be largely extended after crops had been sown and people were waiting for them to ripen.

Stone breaking and road consolidation.

Stone breaking during the open season, and road consolidation under Public Works Department supervision during the rains, formed the backbone of our relief works, and most of the roads thus constructed may fairly be classed as works of permanent improvement. But so many new roads have been thus opened out that the difficulty will be to maintain all of them in proper repair hereafter.

It is doubtless an effective method of providing labour for those who want it, and of saving life, but it is not economical as, under the Task-work System, a very large proportion of workers do very little work and are content with the minimum wage. It was this consideration that led us to start relief to weavers in their own trade. They are very numerous in the large towns of Nagpur, Kamptee, and Umrer, and though most of them were quite willing to go on ordinary relief works, many were found to be very clumsy at stone breaking, and quite incapable of performing the ordinary task. Moreover many of them injured their hands considerably in the attempt, and so found work of that sort anything but congenial.

When piece-work was introduced, some improvement was effected in the outturn of work, but as we had to provide a task work annexé for weakly persons, it continued to be a rather costly form of relief. I therefore consider it less economical and congenial than tank work effected by private enterprise with the aid of famine loans, but of course scope for the latter is limited, and in acutely distressed areas like Balaghat and the greater part of Bhandara, large road works also were indispensable, whether carried out under the task-work or piece-work system.

Weaver relief.

As weaver relief was rather an usual form of relief, I think it as well to give some short description of it here.

The main difference between our scheme and that adopted in Madras was that the latter dealt direct with the labourers and provided for supplying materials to weavers, whereas the Nagpur scheme was worked through middlemen, to whom advances were made.

These middlemen agreed to employ only weavers who urgently needed relief, and who were considered by the officer-in-charge of such relief to deserve help. Advances were made to the middlemen to the extent of half the value of the cloth to be supplied; out of such advances they supplied materials to the weavers, and also made them small cash advances from time to time, to be finally adjusted against their wages, which were to be about one-fourth of the whole outlay. The cloth thus manufactured was then purchased by Government after adjusting all advances.

The scheme was not an original one, but simply an adaptation of the ordinary procedure followed by cloth dealers in Nagpur. It has the following advantages compared with the Madras scheme, *viz.*, the middlemen are sureties for the Government advances; the risk of fraud in substituting inferior stuff for the material supplied is removed; and it can be worked with a much smaller establishment than that required for the Madras scheme.

To any such form of relief there must, however, always be the drawback that stocks of cloth accumulate about the disposal of which some difficulty will probably arise, and there is the risk of flooding the market when such stocks are sold off, and so reviving temporarily the distress which it was sought to relieve.

A certain amount of such cloth can of course be disposed of at poor-houses and relief works, if charitable funds are available to pay for it, as during the recent famine, or if Government decides to give away the cloth in relief. Rao Bahadurs Bhargo Rao and Bapu Rao Dada can give full details about this system of relief.

Gratuitous relief.

Gratuitous relief commenced, in most places, with the establishment of poor-houses, supplemented later on by relief centres, village relief kitchens, cheap grain shops, etc.

Poor-houses.

Poor-houses were of the greatest use throughout the famine, but especially perhaps at the commencement, when the tendency to wander was most prevalent, and before relief works could be generally started in all distressed areas. Starving wanderers as well as the local poor were freely admitted and fed up until fit to be forwarded to their destination, or to be drafted to some relief work.

I do not think that there was much general reluctance to go to poor-houses, but the term "Kangalkhana" was apparently a deterrent to some of the respectable poor class. It has been suggested to me that it would be preferable to describe such institutions as "Annachatra," or, as I believe is done in Madras, "Annasatram". In English it might be called relief-house, as in paragraph 145 of the Report of the former Famine Commission, instead of poor-house.

Among some classes there seems to be the same prejudice against it as against the work-house at home.

At the same time when gratuitous relief is being commenced, willingness to go to a poor-house is rather a good test of real necessity in dealing with professional beggars who clamour for relief and collect in crowds for the purpose during the early stage of famine.

Most of the poor-houses were in charge of an official of the grade of Munsiff, and were on the whole well managed, but in the larger towns there was some difficulty about enforcing residence and maintaining discipline.

Rule XI of Appendix IV to the Code provides as follows:—

> "The building should be surrounded by an enclosure such as not to be easy to surmount, but not so formidable as to make it resemble a jail, since the authorities for keeping the residents inside should rely not so much on the wall, as on the certainty that the patrol will catch and bring back wanderers and beggars."

Experience showed that in large poor-houses it was very unsafe to rely on the latter, and that if residence and discipline are to be strictly enforced, a substantial enclosure is necessary so as to prevent egress otherwise than by the gateway.

Kitchens.

Children's kitchens are a most necessary form of relief, and were much appreciated. I think that they were hardly started soon enough in some places, and it should be clearly provided in the Code that this method of relief should be one of the very first to be adopted. Accommodation should always be provided for homeless children and those coming from a distance, the former being drafted to orphanages when such institutions are started later on. Adult wanderers were also relieved at such kitchens before being passed on.

This also is a very valuable form of relief, and effective method of saving life.

Section 96 of the Code leaves it optional to start such kitchens when it is apprehended that starving parents cannot be trusted to look after their children. This, however, is too vague, for wherever severe distress is declared, such apprehension must exist throughout the distressed area, and children's kitchens should be started at once at suitable centres under the supervision, if possible, of some official. Police and Educational officials were found practically to be the most useful for such work.

Village relief.

Village relief to people in their own homes was very generally and successfully administered in the Bhandara, Balaghat, and Chanda districts, but only given in a modified form in Nagpur and Wardha, where distress was less acute and private charity more active owing to the larger proportion of well-to-do people scattered about in those districts. Organization for such relief in these Provinces is not difficult, as the Land Record Staff is fully utilized for the purpose. The patwari and village mukaddam are jointly responsible for preparing lists under Section 34, and for making payments. Their work is checked by the Circle Officer (Revenue Inspector), who in turn is supervised by an Extra-Assistant Commissioner or special officer of the grade of Tahsildar, Naib, or Munsiff. The main difficulty was in keeping such lists up to date, as during the rains especially frequent additions had to be made from time to time in consequence of people becoming ill and unfit for work.

Another difficulty is to decide when such relief should be commenced, for if begun unnecessarily soon, it checks private charity, which happily is always very ready to come to the aid of the (*a*), (*b*) and (*c*) classes under Section 34, *viz.*, idiots, lunatics, cripples and blind persons. And even in (*d*) class, those who from age or physical weakness are *permanently* incapable of earning their living, can be easily ascertained and provided for. The class who are most likely to suffer consists of those who from sudden illness become *temporarily* unfit for work. These in famine times require to be carefully searched out and promptly relieved.

Cheap grain shops.

A very popular form of relief was the cheap grain shop. Several were introduced in different places in this Division as a form of charitable relief, and were the means of placing good food within the reach of people who shirked the poor-house, though really pinched for food. I watched their effect carefully, but had no reason to suspect that they interfered anywhere with private trade, nor did I receive any complaints to that effect. On the contrary, I think that they often operated to steady the market, and prevent fitful raising of rates (Nos. 228 and 229 of the Famine Commission questions).

Forest concessions.

Forest concessions of all kinds and the free use of mahua being allowed by most zamindars and malguzars, were much appreciated, and afforded much relief, especially to the wild tribes in parts of Chanda and Balaghat, and tended to keep cattle in good condition. The latter consequently fared much better in most parts of the Division than I expected. I think that all these measures have been successful with regard to the relief of distress and saving of human life; and they were certainly carried out with much more economy than relief measures in the Bengal Famine of 1874, when I was District Relief Officer of Jalpaiguri for about six months.

C.—Advice as to the measures and methods of working which seem likely to prove most effective in future in these two respects.

Some of my remarks under heading B are also applicable under C, and I do not think that I can add much to those remarks.

Suggestions about village relief.

With regard to village relief, however, I think that some provision might be made in the Code for local inspection and mustering of inhabitants on the spot, and that this should be started at an early stage of famine so as to keep the lists under section 34 systematically up to date.

I am strongly in favour of the relief given to such people being distributed in grain, not money. A grave objection to the money dole is that it is often spent in drink or on an expensive meal, instead of being spread over the whole term for which it is intended. Moreover, if money is given, the recipients are also tempted to buy inferior and unwholesome food because a larger quantity can be obtained.

For cheap grain shops, tickets were given, and I think this might also be done for village relief, as local banias could then distribute the grain. Section 35 of the Code directs that the Commissioner of the Division shall be responsible for the preparation of the register under Section 34, when in his opinion the scarcity is, or is likely to be, sufficiently great to require this precaution. This responsibility should rest with the District authority, and the register should be prepared promptly when scarcity threatens, without waiting for a Commissioner to decide whether it is, or is likely to be, sufficiently great to require this precaution.

Suggestions for relief-works.

With regard to relief works I have already expressed my opinion that the construction or improvement of tanks and wells, undertaken with famine loans, is the most effective and economical method of providing employment. I would therefore commence with such works if possible, and then, when other and more elaborate works become necessary, I would have them carried out under Public Works Department supervision, chiefly on the piece-work system, conjointly with some task-work for weakly persons as was generally done recently.

Suggestions about piece-work.

Or perhaps some grading of labourers on piece-work might be substituted according to their capacity, *e.g.*, able-bodied, weakly, and intermediate, and work be allotted to them proportionately.

If some such plan could be carried out, task-work might be abolished altogether.

Contractors.

Then occurs the question whether contractors should be employed. Opinions differ in this Division, and I have some difficulty in forming my own conclusion on the point. The main difficulty in managing without contractors is the want of sufficient Public Works Department staff in these Provinces for such an emergency as a general famine. But for such difficulty, I should be inclined to dispense with contractors, as there are many obvious drawbacks to employing them. On the other hand, not only the Public Works Department officers, but most of the Deputy Commissioners in the Division, seem to think that contractors proved very useful, and that practically the piece-work system was worked through them efficiently and without any ill results.

Maximum to be fixed.

One point, however, I would lay great stress on, and that is the necessity for fixing a maximum to be earned by piece-work, for it is not intended that famine work should provide more than a bare subsistence to the labourers employed, whereas with unrestricted piece-work some could earn considerably more.

In paragraph 132 of the Report of the former Famine Commission, it is laid down as one condition of piece-work that it should be optional with labourers to choose between it and the daily wage. I do not agree in this, but think that selection should rest with the officer-in-charge.

Distance test.

In admitting people to relief-works, I would not apply any distance test, for in many tracts, especially in the Balaghat district, people absolutely refuse to leave their homes to go to any work at a distance. In such cases they have to be eventually put on village relief unless work can be found for them near at hand.

D.—Other recommendations or opinions thought likely to be useful in future Famines.

I have little to add to the suggestions made under the two preceding headings, except that in order to be well prepared for another famine, as complete information as possible should be collected and placed on record about the normal condition and resources of each district, with regard to the principal classes inhabiting it, their occupations and ordinary means of subsistence, food-stocks, ordinary imports and exports, difficulties of conveying imported grain to any part of a district, *e.g.*, the remote parts of the Baihar Tahsil in the Balaghat District, and the best way of overcoming such difficulties.

Such information could be picked out from monthly and official reports, and from the district notes for the final Provincial report, but it might be as well to have it put together in a compact form for the use of future generations, as it is to be hoped that another serious famine will not occur during the time of most of the officials who have had to deal with the recent famine.

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I also think it very necessary that legal powers should be conferred to enable District authorities and relief officers to send persons found begging, and wanderers without means of support, and persons who being able, refuse to work, to poor-houses, and to detain them there. (No. 182 of the Famine Commission questions.)

Famine Commission questions.

Without wishing to make this Note tediously long, I think it as well to put on record some information connected with a few of the questions framed by the Famine Commission, about which I might be able to give useful evidence:—

*10. I have had some statistics prepared from the monthly statements. The months when we had the largest numbers on relief were:—

For the whole Division—May, July and September.

For the Bhandara District alone—May, July and September.

For the Balaghat District alone—April, May and July.

The percentages for such periods were:—

For the whole Division	8·6
Bhandara	5·8
Balaghat	23·9

And in Balaghat the percentage for the whole year was 15·2. This was the most acutely distressed district, and much of it being very sparsely populated, the percentage on relief was comparatively high, whereas in Bhandara, which was also acutely distressed, it was low, because that district is densely populated.

These percentages include persons both on relief-works and gratuitous relief.

32. The classes referred to have not been permanently injured, and it is hoped that they will speedily recover in all districts except Balaghat, where recovery will be more gradual.

55. Metal collection is one of the best means of employing relief labour, being easily supervised, and (No. 56) the maximum collected is about two renewal coats, which will all be used up in from 3 to 5 years if all roads are maintained.

70. Programmes of works were maintained, but plans and estimates were not ready prepared in some cases. This should be done for future possible necessity.

71. I consider the greatest distances to be, in case (*a*) 5 miles, in case (*b*) about 20 miles with inducement and 10 miles without.

73. I do not recommend conveying relief labourers to long distances, as they dislike it exceedingly, and it is not difficult in these Provinces to find suitable work for them nearer home.

74. Residence on the works was rather the exception, as many workers lived in their villages close by. At the same time, hutting accommodation and other arrangements were good, and residence on works was not very distasteful (No. 77).

My answer to Nos. 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 81, and 83 is "No" in each case.

89. The fixing of a maximum is very necessary.

101. There was always a large proportion of workers on D wage, but I do not think that it resulted often in enfeebled health.

114. Small isolated works, *e.g.*, village tanks and wells, should be carried out by Civil Officers, and all larger works by the Public Works Department (Nos. 115, 116 and 117).

The division of responsibility and control adopted in the Central Provinces have been described in paragraph 14 of Mr. Higham's note. The arrangements worked very well in this Division, and no change is called for.

118. Officials of the grade of Naib-Tahsildar were generally appointed officers-in-charge, and did well, as a rule, many of them very well. They were placed under the Public Works Department, and this arrangement should be continued in future. (No. 119).

120. All matters, excepting payment of labour, which should be done by the officer-in-charge.

128. There was not much difficulty in inducing members of hill tribes to attend works or in getting them to work satisfactorily near their own homes.

129. The maximum should be 5,000 and minimum 1,000.

133. Answer "No".

138. Yes, tank works on a large scale in Chanda, and in less degree in Nagpur and Bhandara, and field embankments in other parts of the Division.

On Chapter VI-B Mr. Wynne, Bengal-Nagpur Railway, has kindly promised to send a written note; he will not be at Nagpur at the time of sitting of the Commission. I will not attempt to answer here any of the questions under the heads "Gratuitous Relief", "Poor-houses", "Relief Centres" and "Kitchens", as it would make this note too long, but, if required, I am prepared to answer many of them orally. With regard to loans to cultivators and landlords, I will get some figures ready for the oral evidence with respect to No. 199.

200. In the case of money advanced for local improvements, I believe that recipients have as a rule spent it on the object for which it was lent. They were carefully supervised by the Land Record staff and Tahsildars, and the precaution was adopted of paying out large loans by instalments, a further instalment being deferred until it was ascertained that a former one had been properly applied.

201. My answers are Yes—yes.

203. Considerable advances were made for the purchase of food-grain, but chiefly from the Charitable Fund.

204 and 205. Such subsistence advances are very desirable, indeed necessary, for cultivators when sowing their crops and waiting for them to ripen. Otherwise if they were forced to go on relief works, their crops would be neglected and land fall out of cultivation.

208. Such measures were generally taken. Legal provision is required.

209. Suspensions and remissions of land revenue have been a very great boon to the land-owning and cultivating classes, and kept many from relief works, and from being hopelessly involved in debt.

210. Suspended land revenue which has not been remitted will be recovered without difficulty.

213. Government has not such power, but I think it necessary.

214. Immediate remission is preferable.

225. (*a*) Yes; (*b*) Yes.

226. The system of cheap grain shops should be extended.

227. Yes, certainly.

228 and 229. I think that the cheap grain shops did good in every way and that no ill effect resulted.

230. Yes.

231. Broken-down men who cannot raise a loan in any way, either by takavi or from private lender.

232. No.

233. Yes.

234. In giving a fresh start to tenants, weavers, etc., who would otherwise have been nearly ruined.

235 and 236. Rao Bahadur Bhargo Rao can give the best information about this.

237. Gifts of clothing.

239. Yes, because the prosperity of the country generally depends so much on agriculture.

242. Starving wanderers were relieved with money made over for the purpose to the Police, and also at kitchens before being passed on.

245. Several wanderers came from the Rewa and Panna States, and from Azamgarh and a few other districts in the North-Western Provinces.

246. No difference was made in those coming from Native States.

247. It should be ascertained whether work is available for them near their homes; if so, they should be sent back, otherwise detained in poor-house till fit to be drafted to some local relief-work.

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

248. The ratio of deaths per thousand of population for the Division was 59·45 during 1897, compared with 41·37 during 1896, and 34·24 for the five-year period 1891—95. I will be prepared with details for each district if required for the oral evidence.

Excluding Balaghat, the rate was not conspicuously high anywhere, taking the whole period of the year. In Balaghat, a high rate was to be expected, and I doubt whether it could have been kept down much lower than it was considering the very large amount of relief provided both in the shape of works, gratuitous relief, and the very liberal assistance, over three lakhs of rupees, given by the Charitable Fund.

255. Deaths directly due to starvation were very rare, but many doubtless resulted indirectly from privation. I do not think that mortality was greater in any marked degree in one sex than another, but I believe that it was proportionately greater in aged persons and very young children.

Children were doubtless abandoned occasionally, though not frequently, but they were promptly conveyed to orphanages and kitchens.

With reference to the addenda and corrigenda to the questions, my opinion against No. 77A is that there was no strong objection anywhere to residing on relief-works, as arrangements were good and comfortable, but that there was to going long distances, which would involve neglect of homes and cultivation. The objection applied chiefly to the cultivating classes, not to ordinary labourers.

Addenda and corrigenda.

133-A. Under the circumstances described I think it is good policy to arrange at once for special employment of labour by the Public Works Department on ordinary terms, and I think this would have the desired effect.

113-B. Yes, this has been found necessary in the Balaghat District.

113-C. I should think from the budget provision for ordinary public works.

282. I think the rise was reasonable, both on account of local causes and because prices were also high in all other parts of India.

283-A. The difference was inconsiderable.

303 and 303-A. In the Baihar Tahsil of the Balaghat District stocks were so exhausted that money had to be advanced by Government to local dealers who had little capital of their own, to help them to import the necessary amount of grain. The result was successful, but without such help the supply would have failed.

304. I think that the action herein suggested would materially reduce the cost of relief to the State, would operate to steady the market, and would not have a prejudicial effect on private trade, provided the importation by Government was restricted in the manner proposed.

305. I do not think that there were actually any local rings of grain-dealers, but there was difficulty sometimes from dealers holding up stocks and refusing to sell at all. This, however, was generally overcome by persuasion or by threat to interfere in the manner sanctioned by Section 24 of the Code.

(*President.*)—You were Commissioner of the Division throughout the famine?—Since the 8th of April; before that I was Deputy Commissioner of Nagpur.

Have you had long experience of the Central Provinces?—34 years.

Have you had any famine in all that time?—There was some scarcity in the north of the Province in 1867 or 1868. I had no experience of that.

That was in the Saugor Division?—Yes, or rather Jubbulpore.

That was nothing like the recent great failure of crops?—No.

When did you begin to notice a dangerous increase of distress?—At the time it commenced I was acting Inspector General of Police and Jails, and when I resumed charge of the Nagpur District, I found everything had been commenced and a preliminary report submitted.

It has been said that for two or three years the harvests had been very poor?—Yes, for about three years.

Under these circumstances do you think there was a case for commencing relief operations earlier than they were commenced?—Not in this Division.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Do you consider the tank works specially useful?—Yes. *Mr. W. A. Nedham.*

They cannot be used all over the Division?—No, not in the Wardha District. *9th Mar. 1898.*

Have they been largely made?—Yes.

With great benefit?—Yes.

Do you think Government could undertake more of these small tanks so as to enable cultivators to be employed nearer their homes?—I think it is possible.

If it had been tried more during this famine would it have brought relief to cultivators and others?—I think so. The difficulty is the supervision. I think if that could have been arranged for, cultivators, who are very reluctant to come to relief works, would have benefited.

Do you think the supervision an insuperable difficulty?—I think it could be got over if worked through Civil agency. The Revenue Department could supervise such work.

Could you get a malguzar to take a contract for a tank?—I should think that might be possible.

The next point in your written note is about weavers. You saw the working in Nagpur, what do you think of it?—I think it would be difficult on a large scale, but on a small scale it was distinctly successful on the whole.

Is there any possibility of doing anything for the weavers?—It was considered and it was decided that they could get on to the ordinary relief works. They came in fair numbers to the ordinary relief works.

Had you anything to do with the attempts to get rid of cloth in Nagpur?—Yes, to some extent.

Do you think such relief might be extended to other districts?—Yes, Bhandara.

Do you want specially qualified non-officials to take it up?—I think the district staff found some help from such persons necessary.

With regard to children's kitchens, you consider that their not being started soon enough is the fault of the Code?—I think so, to some extent.

Have they proved useful?—Very useful.

Were they scattered over the whole area?—Yes, latterly.

Did all the children who liked get a meal there?—Yes.

Was any ticket required?—I don't think it was considered essential.

If you had a similar famine would you start kitchens earlier?—Yes.

Had you relief centres in any part of the district?—Yes.

What do you think of relief centres as a form of relief?—They were found most successful. They were chiefly employed in Bhandara and Chanda districts.

You kept these relief centres going throughout the famine?—No, Chanda was not an acutely distressed district. They were not started until the commencement of the rains.

Village relief was greatly extended in the rains?—Yes.

Why?—Originally according to the Code only the classes falling under Section 35 are entitled to it, but later on when the cultivators had sown their crops it was found that many were run down and getting emaciated and they were put on village relief temporarily.

Do you think gratuitous relief should have been extended at an earlier date than it was?—I don't think so.

Do you think as a rule your inspecting establishment was sufficiently strong?—Yes, where it was not so, the Local Administration promptly sanctioned applications for special men. For instance 8 additional Revenue Inspectors were sanctioned for one district alone.

Would you put on more Circle Inspectors at an earlier date?—Yes.

With regard to cheap grain shops, do you think Government should start them?—I am not sure about that. I think they are a most excellent institution for private charity, but it is doubtful whether Government should. It requires some consideration.

There is no possible objection to private persons doing it?—None.

In village relief was distribution in grain?—Yes.

Money was also given?—Yes.

Are there any drawbacks to that?—The people often buy inferior stuff, and spend the money too quickly.

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Was there any risk of embezzlement?—Not much, as the recipients knew exactly what they were entitled to.

On page 81 of your note in your suggestions for relief works you are in favour of a piece-work system. Did you see piece-work?—Yes, much of it.

Do you think it kept away people who would have required relief and who would have required task-work?—I don't think so. We had officers in charge who with the help of Hospital Assistants made selections. People who were not fit for piece-work were able to get relief on task-work.

The selection was very often made by the Hospital Assistant?—The order was that it should be done by the Sub-Divisional Officer.

Do you think the selection was properly made?—I think so as a rule, as I checked several selections.

When the later system of payment by results was introduced, did it keep away people to a large extent?—It reduced the numbers. That was rather our object. We were weeding out then.

Was there work in the villages and fields for theese people?—Yes.

Cultivators were able to pay?—Yes.

With regard to wages, what is your opinion about the D wage. Do you think it is a sufficient wage?—Yes.

Would you give the diggers anything more on earthwork?—I think as a rule they got the higher wage.

Would you give the men more?—I would be inclined to give the diggers a higher wage.

You say in reply to question No. 101 that there was always a large proportion of workers on the D wage, and you do not think it resulted often in enfeebled health?—It may have done so in some cases. People grumbled a good deal about the D wage.

Were there any complaints from private employers of labour about the popularity of relief work and the difficulty of getting work?—No, absolutely none.

Any complaints from the railway?—No.

As regards your reply to questions Nos. 204 and 205, were subsistence advances given?—Yes, very largely.

With regard to your reply to question No. 248, why was a high death-rate to be expected in Balaghat?—The death-rate was always higher there than in other districts. In 1896 the rate was 50, in Bhandara it was 36·4 and in Nagpur 37.

Is the District unhealthy?—Yes.

When a special enquiry was made in the Division as to the cause of mortality, what was the general conclusion arrived at?—The general conclusion was that for Balaghat and Bhandara the high death-rate was, more or less, the indirect result of privation. I mean to say there was no special fever in these districts. The death-rate in Chanda was very little above the normal, 41 against 38. In Nagpur and Wardha it was much higher than the normal only for two or three months. Enquiry showed that during part of August, September and October there was an unusual amount of fever of a particularly virulent type and that the death rate was quite as large among the well-to-do as among the people who suffered from privation.

(*President.*)—Was it a kind of famine fever?—It might have been.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Is it contagious?—It might be. Enquiry showed that the well-to-do suffered equally with those who might be suspected to be enduring privation.

(*Mr. Holderness*).—In Balaghat that was not the case, was it?—No.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Are there any statistics of deaths from bowel complaints?—I am afraid I have not got them separately.

When were kitchens started?—In June in Balaghat, a little earlier in Bhandara.

And gratuitous relief?—In April.

On a large scale?—Yes. All those people who come under section 34.

What was the condition of those who came first to gratuitous relief; were they very much emaciated?—Not those who came under section 34. Subsequently cultivators while waiting for their crops to ripen got emaciated and of course they were brought on simply on account of that.

Did you meet any cases of deaths from starvation—any corpses?—I don't remember seeing any.

You say that at Chanda the people did not suffer much?—No.

Is registration reliable there?—I think so.

Did the distressed districts derive great benefit from the forest concessions?—Yes, very great.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—Was there a continuous stream of famished people who were going from the Berars through Nagpur and Wardha?—Yes.

Were there many deaths?—Yes, I think there must have been. They came even from the North-Western Provinces towards the Berars. They were turned back from the Berars and some probably died on the journey.

(*President.*)—Were they turned back?—Yes; the Berar authorities complained about the great influx of wanderers, and we got telegraphic orders. An order was sent by the Government of India to Berar that they might expel these people, after we had received notice that they were coming. They had money or food given them to carry them along.

Were they ever given carriage?—Occasionally I think. I should like to add that I afterwards wrote demi-officially to the Commissioner of the Berars, and the prohibition about people going there was removed in consequence when the famine abated.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—Do the people not emigrate in ordinary years from Balaghat?—Yes, they do.

About what time?—When the rice harvest is over.

You said tanks could not be made in Wardha. Could wells be made with equal profit?—No; wells could be only on a comparatively small scale.

You say on page 81 of your written note that many people, especially in the Balaghat District, absolutely refuse to leave their homes to go to any work at a distance. What class of people do you refer to?—Cultivators and hill tribes.

(*President*).—With reference to the last part of your answer to question No. 255, it has been suggested in some parts of the country that there are special reasons why cultivators and petty landlords should not be obliged to go to works at a distance from their homes. On the other hand, there are good reasons why people like the landless labouring class should be made to go to a distance as a test. Then you might have small works to which people should only be admitted by order of the village inspecting agency. To these works people of weak health and cultivators who have reasons for staying at home should be admitted and other able-bodied people in need of relief should be refused admission to these works and referred to public works at a distance which were managed by the Public Works Department. Do you think the village inspecting agency would be strong enough to discriminate between the people and give orders?—Yes, I think so with proper supervision.

Do you think the system is a workable system?—Yes.

I think you said that the kitchen system practically was that any children who went there got food; if so, this was giving up all test of real necessity?—I was wrong in saying that all children got it. I meant all children who were apparently in need of it,—who looked emaciated and as if they had been neglected, only those got it. I am very much averse to money relief being given to children; that is a very great mistake.

At the Commissioner's Office, Raipur.

THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

Friday, 11th March 1898.

PRESENT:

SIR J. B. LYALL, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I. (PRESIDENT).

SURGEON-COLONEL J. RICHARDSON.
MR. T. W. HOLDERNESS, C.S.I.
MR. T. HIGHAM, C.I.E.

RAI BAHADUR B. K. BOSE, C.I.E.
MR. A. D. YOUNGHUSBAND, (*Temporary Member for the Central Provinces*).

MR. H. J. MCINTOSH, *Secretary*.

MR. H. M. LAURIE, Deputy Commissioner, Raipur, called in and examined.

Mr. H. M. Laurie.

11th Mar. 1898.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

(*a*) *Departures from the principles of the Central Provinces Famine Code, which have occurred in the Central Provinces during the recent Famine.*

In the Raipur District there was no marked departure from the principles of the Central Provinces Famine Code in the course of famine relief operations save in the system of work adopted on Public Works Department roads. The introduction of the piece-work system was the most important departure of the kind. Even on works where this system was not in force the lines indicated in the Code were not followed in the matter of the classification of labourers and their concentration on works. The majority of our Public Works Department road labourers, as far as my observation goes, went away at night to villages near the work. The large works were more numerous than what seems to be contemplated in the Code.

In other respects relief operations were generally in accordance with the Code. The Code, however, hardly gives sufficient prominence to the subject of local works carried out by private persons from their own funds or loan funds. This was a matter to which great attention was given in this District, and the control of the administration of loan funds and the starting of local work, where necessary, formed a main part of famine work up to the beginning of the rains.

Modifications in detail occurred in the management of poor-houses and in the grouping of relief circles under the charge of Sub-Divisional Officers other than Tahsildars.

(*b*) *Degree of success which has attended the measures adopted, considered primarily with regard to the relief of distress and saving of life, and secondarily with regard to economy.*

The mainstay of the people during the famine has been employment on works. The largest number relieved has been on Public Works Department road works, but private works contributed very largely to the support of the people. On the whole a greater degree of success attended private works than Public Works Department works, that is to say, a larger number of persons has been relieved on the money spent than has been the case with Public Works Department works. I understand that the work done on Public Works Department works is worth about one-third of the actual cost. It is not in this District in all respects useful. For instance, much of the metal-breaking done is work which no Deputy Commissioner would have desired for the sake of the improvement of the district to have had carried out. On the other hand, the private work, consisting as it does in the construction or deepening of village tanks even, where it has been imperfectly carried out, is rarely altogether wasted. In some cases where the site has been well chosen, Government will gain by the consequent improvement of the land irrigated. Besides this, the expenditure incurred by Government has been in the way of loans only. Great economy was shown in the matter of gratuitous relief. The village relief doles which took the place of village works, and to a considerable extent of Public Works Department work when the rains came on, undoubtedly saved many lives. If anything, there was too much fear of extravagance in the distribution of village relief. Poor-houses were necessary, but they did not do so much good, having regard to their cost, as might have been the case had the system of village relief been more developed. Children's kitchens were not started till late in the famine. They were found inexpensive and efficient. Town relief was not found to be much needed.

(*c*) *Advice as to the measures and methods of working which seem likely to prove most effective in future in these two respects.*

I am in favour for districts like that of Raipur, where there is ample scope for the improvement of agriculture by means of village tanks, to make the grant of loans on favourable terms for the construction and repair of such works the backbone of famine relief during the cold weather and hot weather months. It would be more economical in the long run to grant a rebate of as much as 40 per cent. on loans for this purpose than to launch out into expenditure on road construction. There are many cases where well construction loans would be taken and where the labour required for carrying out well construction could be controlled so as to make it afford relief to distressed persons in the village. These wells, however, would not be used for irrigation but drinking purposes. I do not think that in famine times the district could do without some large works under the Public Works Department, in the event of there being a famine as severe as that of 1896-97; but I think that with larger expenditure on private works (in the way of loans on favourable terms) there would be a hope of greater saving of life at a smaller cost and of greater improvement in the district as the result of the expenditure. It has been found that earthwork can be done on roads in many places even during the rains. But I am not in favour of the continuance of Public Works Department road work during the monsoon months more than can be avoided. According to my opinion the main feature of famine relief in the rains should be gratuitous relief in villages. This should be freely given wherever emaciation becomes apparent. To avoid waste of money as far as possible, a condition may be made that some form of agricultural labour, say, the *weeding* of the rice fields, is to be done by those who are given such relief. But it is in my opinion essential to the saving of life during famine that during the rainy months the idea of economy should be more than at any other time made subordinate to the saving of life. Children's kitchens should also be used more freely than was done. I should like to see Public Works Department work conducted entirely on the piece-work system (with infirm gangs) according to "Mr. Penny's rules". I should expect Public Works Department work to play an important but subordinate part in the scheme of famine relief. Gratuitous relief in villages should play the most important part. The village works would be conducted under control as was done to a considerable extent in 1897. This would be condition of the rebate. Private works from loan funds should be supplemented by Government works under local agency on a small scale, when the

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circumstances of malguzar or tenants are such that no one in the village can afford to take a loan even on favourable terms. The only distinction between such work and work done from private funds would be in the liability of the improvement, if any, to immediate enhancement. Provision might be made for this.

(*d*) *Other recommendations or opinions thought likely to be useful in future Famines.*

I am in favour of the free employment of European agency in the control of famine relief operations. Where officers from the Staff Corps can be lent, and are willing to come to the work, I think that their services should be used as much as possible. The extent to which European agency is needed will vary with the extent to which distress exists, and I do not think that any exact rule on the subject can be laid down. The officers chosen should, if possible, have been for some years in the country and should have some knowledge of the vernacular. In regard to the control of Public Works, it appears to me that it would be of advantage if the Executive Engineer were for famine operations to be placed under the orders of the Commissioner of the Division. The Commissioner of the Division would, in communication with the Secretariat, give orders as to the starting of works and provision of funds. In 1897 it was not enough for the Commissioner to sanction the opening of a work. The Executive Engineer had to obtain sanction from the Local Administration in the Public Works Department. I think that this occasioned delay and gave rise to hesitation. It should have been for the Commissioner to obtain sanction or, if necessary, to direct the opening of a work in anticipation of sanction. The Executive Engineer should have been in a position to act without further reference on orders received from the Commissioner, and the Commissioner in a position to issue the orders. I consider that it would be expedient to have a special officer of the Public Works Department, and perhaps with him an officer of the Revenue Department, deputed to work out a scheme of village works to be taken up in case of famine. I would amend the Code by laying stress on the usefulness of gratuitous relief at the homes of the people. The poor-house management rules given in the Appendix should be recast and prominence given to the subject of drafting out on to village relief.

(*President.*)—Were you in charge of the Raipur District throughout the famine?—Yes.

When did you join?—November 1895.

What kind of rice harvest had you in 1895?—We had an average for the district of an 8 anna crop.

I see from a report to the Government of India from Sir Charles Lyall, that when he first passed through the Raipur District the people presented him with an address demanding relief of various kinds. What do you know about it?—I was not in Raipur then, but I do not think that any special orders were passed on the address of the people. It is usual for people to present an address to the Chief Commissioner when he passes through the district. I do not remember the facts.

Were there any signs of famine then?—No, I do not think so. But I did think there was something wrong in parts of the districts then. I had lists made of the parts of the district in which the crops were short.

Anything done?—I had works started through the agency of the malguzars as far as possible, and reported matters to the Commissioner.

Out of takavi advances?—Yes.

What kind of works?—Field embankments and improvements.

Did they agree to carry on such works?—Yes. But I could only advise them.

Is not takavi given every year?—It has been the custom to give some takavi every year. A special amount was placed at my disposal towards the end of the year 1896.

Was there any complaint received about the distress in April or May 1896?—I do not remember receiving any particular complaint. Bodies of villagers came to the Cutcherry and asked me to help them. They did not ask for food.

Then what help?— They wanted seed grain.

Any dacoities in 1896?—Not in April or May 1896.

Was any special measure taken to relieve them pending the result of the kharif harvest?—No, nothing special was done. I was anxious however and was watching the result of the kharif operations. I knew that the preceding crops were short.

When did you know that the kharif crops of 1896 had failed?—Beginning of October 1896. It was in the Lown pargana that the signs of distress first became evident, and Mr. Ganga Sing, a Special officer, was then sent to open test relief works.

What kind of test works?—Road making and earthwork.

On the ordinary Public Works Department system?—No, not on the Public Works Department system. The District Fund officers were in charge of the work, and those people in want were employed on it.

Was any notice sent to the people?—No proclamation was made. No special steps were taken to make it known; it was considered that the thing would be known by itself.

When was this?—End of September 1896.

Did they come?—Yes.

Was the work a proper test?—No. It was not really a test work as admission was not free; only those actually in distress were admitted to the work.

Was the work carried on?—Yes, but ultimately it became a part of the Public Works Department scheme when regular Public Works Department relief-works began.

When?—Early in December, 2nd or 3rd, when the works were taken up by the Public Works Department.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—The Chief Commissioner held a Conference on the 21st November 1896. What was the plan of relief decided on at that Conference?—I think it was decided that certain road works were to be opened as relief works under the Public Works Department, that lists were to be drawn up as basis for gratuitous relief, and that District Local Boards should be encouraged to start works. As regards the zamindars, it was decided to investigate into their condition.

And as regard forests?—It was decided to throw open the forests for edible products.

You had a second Conference in March?—Yes. It was in the beginning of January, before this Conference, that it was decided that Government should take over the poor-houses, and village relief was started in February.

Can you tell us when private poor-houses were started?—End of August 1896. We had started some poor-houses in December, but after the Conference all poor-houses were under Government management; we had in all five of them.

What do you mean by poor-houses?—They were places where cooked and uncooked food doles were distributed. They were really relief centres and not poor-houses.

You took them over in January. Was there any special reason why you should not have taken them over before?—No, I cannot say. The distress was not developed to an extent to make it necessary to have Government poor-houses.

Who found the money for the maintenance of these poor-houses?—They were maintained by subscription.

When was the village list for gratuitous relief ready?—In January.

As regards the local works, were any advances made?—Yes, I think the actual payment was not made till January, as enquiries were being made meantime as to who required loans and how they were to be utilized.

Was there any demand for labour?—I cannot say that there was.

The Public Works Department works were opened in January?—Yes. We had three large Public Works Department works in January.

How many works were open in March?—Four.

Were these four sufficient?—No. I opened one more.

Did you ask for more works?—Yes.

Was there any difficulty on the part of the Public Works Department in getting staff?—I think so. I wanted large works to be opened on the Lown-Bhatapara road near the Tilda-Sirpur road, about 16 miles in length.

What were the other three works opened?—Simga-Kawardha, Tilda-Kharora, Damda-Deorbija.

All on the north?—Yes, taking the district as a whole.

Then as regards gratuitous relief did you start distribution before March?—Yes, some distribution had been made. But the numbers on this relief were small, especially as the local works provided labour to many.

Were these local works in full swing?—Yes.

The Conference of March decided to open more roads. How many did they open?—It was the programme of the Commissioner to open roads. I think eleven in all were opened. The District authorities had simply to say that they wanted more road-works and then arrangements were at once made to open them.

Were they all surveyed?—No. The opening however would depend on the survey; when it was determined to open a particular road work it was surveyed and work started.

How many roads did you open by the setting in of the rains?—As many as 21 by May.

Had you then as many works as you wanted?—Yes; that brought relief to every part of the distressed area.

Did it bring relief to all villages?—I think so.

At what distance were these works from the villages?—In some cases 15 to 20 miles, and even at a distance of 30 miles.

The private local works continued going on in addition to the Government works?—Yes.

A good deal of money was spent on them?—Yes.

How much?—Three lakhs.

It gave a good deal of employment in the villages?—Yes, a good deal.

Between March and the setting in of the rains, did your works expand?—Yes.

What was it due to?—Village works were made to take the place of village relief; Supervising officers insisted on weakly persons being employed on the works although they could do no work at all.

How many Revenue Circle Inspectors have you in ordinary times?—Twenty-four.

Were these increased?—Yes.

When was the increase made?—Just at the close of the hot weather.

You worked with the ordinary staff till then?—Yes.

Were they relieved of their ordinary duties?—No, they carried on the work in addition to their ordinary duties.

How many villages would the Circle Inspector have under him?—From 125 to 150 villages.

You increased their number at the end of May?—Yes, as it was considered that their movement from place to place would be difficult in the rains.

Had you any extra Tahsildars or extra Assistant Commissioners?—We had extra Tahsildars who were able to give more attention to out-door work.

Any extra Assistant Commissioners?—Yes. At the March Conference it was decided to get a Civilian, and it was arranged to obtain the loan of a Punjab Civilian, but eventually we got a Staff Corps officer.

Was he employed under the Public Works Department?—No, under me.

Was he useful?—Yes, extremely.

What about the Punjab Civilian. Did you get him?—I think we did.

Between March and the end of the hot weather had you a full staff of village inspectors, tahsil staff and head-quarters staff?—I would have preferred to have a stronger staff.

More Circle Inspectors?—At the time I thought on the whole I had a sufficiently strong staff. But I now think I should have had a stronger staff, especially of Circle Inspectors.

Supposing you had had a larger staff, how would you have employed them?—Chiefly in supervising gratuitous relief.

In that case you would have had more people on gratuitous relief?—Yes, but supervision would also have been better.

From the setting in of the rains did your numbers on works increase or decrease?—Decreased, partly owing to the development of gratuitous relief and partly owing to the rains.

You mean your gratuitous relief went up?—Yes.

You put people suffering from privation on gratuitous relief?—Yes. The first step was to put on temporary village relief persons not permanently incapacitated, but who were in a state of emaciation.

(*President.*)—What was the cause of the increase on gratuitous relief and decrease on the works. Had the orders of the Pachmari Conference anything to do with it?—It is difficult to say what the exact reason was. The introduction of the piece-work system about this time may also have had something to do with it. And the local works closed at the beginning of the rains.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Do you think the decrease was partly due to the introduction of the piece-work system?—Yes; as far as I can judge I think it was partly due to the introduction of piece-work.

Then with regard to poor-houses, you went on as before?—Yes.

Did you close any works?—Yes, all the local works were closed.

And Public Works Department works?—Very few of them were closed. We kept them mostly going.

When did you first introduce piece-work on any work in the district?—End of May. Please look at the report, dated 15th April, General Circular, Public Works Department, of the Raipur Conference. Piece-work was introduced on eight charges by the orders of this Conference.

Under Mr. Penny's rules?—Yes; in consequence of the above orders Mr. Penny's rules were insisted on.

How did these rules work. What was the effect?—I think the rules worked admirably.

Did it turn off a certain number of people?—It is quite possible they did. It is difficult to say under the conditions what would be the true reasons for the people leaving the works. But I do not think the system turned off people really in need of relief.

Did it work injuriously on the people?—No.

Did you inspect the gangs?—Yes.

Was provision made for weak gangs?—Yes; task-work was provided for weakly gangs.

In any case some people would have gone off the works when rain set in?—I expect so. I was surprised to see so many on the works.

You think by the time piece-work was introduced people were not in need of relief?—I think by then they had laid by small sums.

Are you in favour of piece-work?—Yes, particularly in the early days.

Do you think people on piece-work would lay by anything?—Possibly. I do not think they would do so to any harmful extent.

Do you think you would have had fewer people on the works if you had piece-work from the beginning?—Possibly.

When you say you are in favour of the piece-work system for future famines, what kind of piece-work are you thinking of?—Piece-work based on Mr. Penny's rules.

You mean piece-work without maximum with contractors?—Yes, under control as provided in the rules.

Under these rules there must be full provision for infirms?—Yes, that was the condition.

They earn good wages on piece-work under these rules?—Yes, as far as my enquiry went, they earned slightly more than under task-work, that is to say, slightly more than B wage on the whole.

Were they satisfied with these rules?—They were altogether satisfied. They liked them very much.

(*Mr. Younghusband.*)—They were unpopular for a day or two. Every change is unpopular, is it not?—Yes.

Mr. Holderness.)—I understand the applicants on going to the works were classified by the Hospital Assistant. Was this classification satisfactorily done?—I think so; I had no fault to find.

Was there any difficulty about settling the gangs. Were the members of families separated?—No; they settled that point among themselves.

Children under 12 were not given work?—If a child was able to work it was allowed to stop on the works.

Was this rule strictly observed?—I do not think so.

What about the mortality. Did it increase during the rains?—The largest increase was in May from cholera

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when the mortality went up to 11,000 from 5,000. The mortality in—

April was	3·76.
May	8·18
June	9·93
July	7·69
August	10·92
September	9·82
October	9·30
November	6·94

Was this increase due to cholera?—Yes, to a large extent.

The mortality from cholera was very high?—Yes.

The heavy mortality in the month of August was not due to cholera. Can you account for it?—No; it is the unhealthy period of the year.

What classes of the people showed the heaviest mortality?—All classes alike. I ascertained that the mortality was fairly general to all classes, and was chiefly due to fever.

Infectious fever?—I do not believe it to be infectious.

What was the difficulty in giving special relief to cultivators?—They were distinctly disinclined to go to the works.

Did they show any great signs of privation?—Yes, they did.

Do you think the mortality was high among petty cultivators?—Yes.

Did you relieve them?—Yes, from Charitable Funds, and to a certain extent by local works and gratuitous relief.

Any local works during rains?—Yes, nominally so called.

Any gratuitous relief during the rains?—Yes.

Any advances?—No loans were given, but they were given money from Charitable Funds for subsistence.

Kitchens?—Yes.

How many?—Forty-five towards the end of the rains.

Did everybody get food?—The kitchens were not intended for adults; they were mostly for children.

When did you start them?—Towards the end of the rains.

Do you think they did great benefit to the children?—Yes, children whose parents were at distant works were greatly benefited by these kitchens.

Did you buy any seed grain for the cultivators?—Yes; instead of giving them money we purchased a suitable amount of seed grain for them towards the end of March.

How did you store the seed grain?—Two or three different methods were adopted. The general practice was to store the seed in central places from where the people came and took it away; another method was to have a store-house in the village in which the people stored their grain and took it away when the time came.

Do you think such special precautions necessary?—Yes, necessary and useful.

You would do it again?—Yes.

You say during the rainy months the idea of economy should be more than at any other time subordinate to the saving of life. Would you increase "gratuitous relief"?—I would suggest that we should be more liberal in dealing with emaciated and permanently incapacitated persons. It is these persons who easily succumb during the rains.

You think kitchens might have started earlier?—Yes, from the very beginning.

Would you work them in the same way?—Yes, but the children who could return to their homes should be allowed to do so. I do not like children living there.

The private works to which you refer in your written evidence were executed by means of loans?—Yes, I think so.

Would you another time give more advances?—Yes, in those districts where we require tanks.

Did you do anything to help the people to have their fields weeded?—Yes, the local works did a good deal in that way. We gave money to the malguzar or some respectable villager and told them that they should get a certain amount of weeding done.

At Government expense?—Yes; this was really only another form of gratuitous relief.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Your mortality from cholera during 1896 was very high in the Raipur district. Were relief works going on then?—No. The mortality was among the general population.

But had you much cholera among the relief-workers in 1897?—In villages near the works there was much cholera, but not on the works themselves.

Did you move your camps when you found there was cholera close by?—Yes, we moved our camps.

Had that any effect on the cholera mortality?—Yes. The people did not like moving, but it had the effect of considerably reducing mortality.

Had the water supply anything to do with the outbreak?—The water supply was scarce and impure.

Was the medical aid sufficient?—Yes, but I think the staff of Hospital Assistants should have been larger; we found it insufficient.

You had a District Medical Officer to look after the people on the works?—Yes. One Special Hospital Assistant was supposed to be attached to each work, but owing to the great rapidity with which the works were opened, we had in many cases only compounders or vaccinators to attend to the medical wants of the people.

How many charges had you?—About 24.

The Commissioner says the doctors had a free hand to give what comforts they liked to the poor people. Don't you think these comforts come rather late to be of any practical use to an emaciated person?—Yes, those in certain stages of starvation died in spite of all care. The emaciated died in large numbers. I am inclined to think that the people in the poor-houses in all districts were in the same advanced state of emaciation when admitted.

Did the comforts offered by you save many lives?—Yes.

Don't you think it would be better if you could intercept emaciation?—It is hard to advise. I would be wrong in saying that emaciation is the only test for admission to gratuitous relief. I would include those permanently incapacitated, and who have no one to support them.

(*President.*)—The failure of the kharif crop of 1896 was the second failure for the district as a whole; the rabi crop is in comparison insignificant. In April and May 1897 people were coming in large numbers to the relief works, and the death-rate was high. And prices were double the normal. Under these circumstances, do you think it was safe to drive the people away from works by the adoption of the piece-work system or by any other means?—Yes, I think it was quite safe to take steps to reduce the numbers on works: it was extremely desirable to get the people to their fields; it was necessary to ensure the harvest of 1897 being sown.

You thought it was safe to get them to go to field work?—Yes, it was desirable to get the fields ready for the rains.

(*Mr. Younghusband.*)—The object was to encourage them to return to field work, was it not?—Yes; it was surely a good plan.

(*President.*)—Was the opening of the forests for grazing?—It was not intended for grazing in the first instance, but grazing was subsequently allowed. I mean free grazing was allowed and the collection of fees was suspended. The forests were opened in February 1897 for edible products, but in the middle of October 1896 they were thrown open for collecting wood, grass, etc.

Do you think the returns of mortality correct?—I do not think they are very accurate. The presence of cholera and the distress of the village watchman probably made them more inaccurate than usual. But I must add that it was not possible for the kotwars to carry on their duties properly and report deaths to the village officers in time, as they were themselves in great distress.

(*Mr. Younghusband.*)—Were not corrected returns submitted afterwards?—Yes, but I am not sure.

Are the Zamindari death-rates included in the returns?—I think so.

(*President.*)—I see that in 1897 a very large area has remained uncultivated. Do you attribute it to the high mortality?—I think it was due almost entirely to want of seed.

(*Mr. Younghusband*).—Was it partially made up by the increase of rabi crop?—Yes, I think so.

(*President.*)—I see that the total kharif area in 1897-98 has fallen off by 17 per cent. Was it owing to want of seed

or tenants and seed?—Chiefly due to want of seed, and I think also owing to deaths and desertion among tenants.

We have been told by some witnesses that when the people returned from the works they found their houses in ruin. Did you see anything of that sort at Raipur?—Yes, I saw a great many ruined houses.

Is that any argument for having small works close to the villages?—Not a very strong argument.

Do you think it is possible to have a system of large works under the Public Works Department in each district, to which all able-bodied men could be sent, and have one or two small works under the Circle Inspectors or Civil agency, to which only such persons as the Civil officers think proper should be admitted?—Yes, I think it would be possible, but the field labourer and the cultivator should be admitted to the small works.

Do you think it is safe for the others to leave their homes?—They will not suffer to the same extent as the field labourer and cultivator.

They would all prefer to be on small works?—Yes.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—Do you think tank work useful both for irrigation and for village purposes?—Yes, for both purposes.

Would you have these tanks built by Government or by the aid of takavi?—If possible by private persons with the aid of takavi.

How would you supervise them?—I would give the money to the malguzars and see that they built the tanks wherever necessary.

Do you think you could trust the malguzars?—Yes, with the same system of supervision as we had over gratuitous relief.

Then you would employ all cultivators on these works?—Yes, as far as possible.

I think in July last you had a census taken of those cultivators whose land had not been cultivated?—As far as my memory serves it was not taken into account; a proper census of the tenants absent from their holdings could not be got.

You had very large advances from the Charitable Fund for the cultivators?—Yes, we had R2,60,000; this included subsistence money.

What was the approximate amount of loans to the agriculturists?—We gave over two lakhs in loans.

What was the amount of the Government loans?—Nearly four lakhs.

Your private kitchens were started in October?—Yes; we called them "private poor-houses;" they were properly speaking relief centres.

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Along with them you had Municipal works?—Some local works in the town itself.

You had special subscriptions for housing and clothing them?—Yes, a certain portion of the subscriptions collected was devoted to these people for the purpose of housing and clothing.

Anything else?—Yes, there was a complete depletion of seed grain in certain parts of the district, and we helped them to purchase seed.

Was not that purchased from takavi advances?—Yes, to a considerable extent.

A considerable portion of your takavi advances was spent on seed grain, was it not?—Yes.

And also from the Charitable Fund?—Yes.

Did you get seed from outside?—No, mostly from the district itself.

Have you any nomadic tribes?—Yes, a considerable number of them.

Was any special relief given to them?—Instructions were given to the Police to feed such people and send them to the works if fit to work; if not to arrange and send them to their homes.

Was there much loss of cattle?—No, we were singularly fortunate. Our loss of cattle was less than what it was in 1896.

Were the Zamindari forests thrown open?—Yes, several of them, by the zamindars as an act of charity.

Did you give special relief to the weavers?—Yes, chiefly through the Charitable Relief Committee.

Were any advances made by Government for their relief?—Yes, but the Charitable Fund refunded the amount to Government.

You mean refund from the amount realized by the sale of cloth?—No, refund of the money spent by Government on these weavers was made by the Charitable Relief Committee to Government, as there was some change of opinion as to who should bear the cost of the special relief in the shape of advances, etc., made to these people. The Committee had started organizing certain relief for these people.

Did it work satisfactorily?—Yes.

You think the special relief afforded to these weavers useful?—Yes, extremely useful.

You had also a cheap grain shop from the Charitable Fund. Do you think it was advantageous to have cheap grain shops?—Yes, I think so.

(*President.*)—I think you have just said in answer to Mr. Bose's question about cattle, that more cattle died in 1896 than in 1897. Can you give percentage?—From the returns I find in 1895-96 the number of deaths among cattle was 10,346, while in 1896-97 it is 4,673.

MR. F. J. COOKE, Deputy Commissioner, Bilaspur, called in and examined.

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I put in a written statement of evidence.

I propose to group my remarks under the various subject headings adopted for the printed questions. Of these the first is—

(I).—THE EXTENT AND SEVERITY OF THE DISTRESS.

The area of the Bilaspur District is 8,341 square miles, and the population 1,164,158. The entire area was returned as affected, but some parts were less affected than others. Speaking generally distress was very severe in the western and central parts, and somewhat less so in the east. In the wilder parts in the north-east distress was much less severe. The population of this tract would not exceed 65,000.

Rice occupies more than two-thirds of the cropped area of the district. The famine was due to the failure of this crop in two successive years (1895 and 1896) caused by the early cessation of the monsoon. Distress was aggravated by the abnormally high prices. The rains ceased each year about the 3rd September, after which date only a few local showers were received. The outturn of rice was returned at 6 annas in 1895, and at 4 annas in 1896. But in 1896, and probably also in the previous year, there was a very great difference in the outturn on different lands, and the District average was raised a good deal by the excellence of the crop on irrigated and lowlying (*bahra*) lands. There were considerable tracts in most villages and probably not a few entire holdings which produced very little indeed. Other kharif crops were also very poor in both years. The cold weather rains of 1895-96 failed altogether and there was therefore a poor rabi. Rabi crops however are of little importance except in the west and south-west. This part of the district had suffered from inferior crops (other than rice) for some years.

From 1889 to 1895 the price of husked rice remained pretty constant at about 18 seers per rupee. The price of wheat fluctuated considerably during this period varying from 14½ to 22½ seers per rupee. Wheat however does not form part of the food of the people. At the height of the famine (July and August) rice was selling at head-quarters at 7½ seers and wheat slightly cheaper. In the interior prices rose to 6 and even 5½ and 5 seers. Prices were highest in the extreme west, more than 50 miles from the railway. At the end of 1897 rice was selling at 18 seers and wheat at 9 seers per rupee.

In the famine of 1869 rice rose to 9 seers and wheat to 10 seers per rupee. The rise, however, was really greater than that of 1896-97. In January 1863 rice was selling at 80 seers and wheat at 88 seers per rupee. Some bad seasons then followed, and in 1865 rice was selling at 35 seers and wheat at 26. In the following year rice rose to 20 and wheat to 13. In 1870, the year after the famine,

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rice fell to 24 seers and wheat to 48 seers. The price of rice fell soon after 1870 to 40 and even 45 seers. Chhattisgarh was then landlocked and export and import was a matter of difficulty, time and expense.

The predominant crop as I have said is rice and it is of course dependent on timely and sufficient rain. The irrigated area last year amounted to only 6·7 per cent. of the cropped area, and only 8·7 of the rice area was irrigated. Much of this is only imperfectly irrigated.

The total quantity of rain was little, if at all, below the normal. The failure of the crops was due to its bad distribution.

I doubt the truth of the opinion I have seen expressed that the failure of only one harvest cannot cause severe distress. I think that it can do so though not immediately. There seems to have been somewhat severe distress in parts of this district in September and October 1896 in consequence of the rice failure of 1895. When distress began I cannot say, as I did not join the district till November. I judge from accounts I have heard. In the wheat-growing parts of the Damoh District also distress was becoming severe in February 1895 owing to the failure of the wheat crop in the previous year. By severe distress I mean that cases of emaciation were not uncommon.

II.—The Sufficiency and Economy of Relief measures.

Relief measures in this district included the following:—

(1) Relief-works—

(*a*) Under the Public Works Department.

(*b*) Under Civil Officers.

(2) Private works assisted by takavi advances.

(3) Weaver-relief.

(4) Village-relief.

(5) Poor-houses.

(6) Kitchens.

The numbers on relief in this district amounted at their highest to 12·8 per cent. of the population. In parts the percentage was higher. In the Bilaspur Tahsil, for instance, (Khalsa portion) the number on village relief alone amounted at one time to 12 per cent. of the population, so that the number on relief of all kinds would have amounted to between 16 and 17 per cent. of the population.

With regard to the opinion expressed by the Famine Commission that one large work in each sub-division would prove sufficient, it is obvious that much depends on the size of the sub-division. In these Provinces they are very large in point of area. In this district there were fifteen large works for three sub-divisions or tahsils. On an average there was one work for every 556 square miles of distressed area, or, if the open part of the district be alone considered, one for 320 square miles. But this was only after the middle of August. On the 1st June there were nine works open (eight in the open country) with an average of 927 square miles to each or in the open country 560 square miles. The numbers on relief-works at their highest (15th August) amounted to 3·8 per cent. of the population of the district. Some relief-works were less popular than others, but on the whole the people resorted to them eagerly, more eagerly apparently than in 1869. Distress was probably more severe and the wage offered in 1869 was very low (one anna for a man, 3 pice for a woman, and 2 pice for children). The number of works then opened in this district was only two or for a short time three.

Gratuitous relief was mainly given by means of doles of money at the homes of the people. This kind of relief was at one time being given to over 90,000 people or 7·8 per cent. of the population. Some cases of course occurred in which persons not in real want and not belonging to the classes specified in the Code were relieved, but such cases bore a very small proportion to the total relieved. The number of people reduced by privation to a condition in which they could not work was so large, that the difficulty was generally the other way, in securing, I mean, that all deserving cases were included. Village relief no doubt saved a great many lives and did a great deal of good in preventing wandering, but I doubt whether the good results of this system can ever be commensurate with the expenditure. The mental and moral prostration of the people, as a result of privation, is so great, that many seem incapable of utilising to the best advantage the income provided for them. Some would spend the bulk of it on a few extravagant meals, starving for the remainder of the month, and not a few actually perished from eating to excess or from using diet which they could not assimilate. Even rice was beyond the powers of many to digest.

III.—The arrangements existing for ascertaining the imminence or scarcity.

The crop returns can be relied upon to show the area and the kind of crop sown. They do not show the extent to which sowings may have failed. Nor is any return submitted showing the condition of the crops except for the following, *viz.*:—

Cotton.	Wheat.
Til.	Linseed.

For each of these crops two forecasts (showing area and condition) are submitted. I would suggest that forecasts be submitted for all the more important crops. Thus early information would be received both as to condition and area. It is not until the 1st April that the areas even of kharif crops are known.

IV.—The Extent to which the prescriptions of the Famine Code have been departed from or found unsuitable.

(1) *Relief-works.*

I would not put much trust in a system of private works assisted by takavi advances. Every encouragement should be given to such works and all who wish to start them and apply for advances should be given them. Many landowners in the late famine did a good deal, but the majority are unwilling to launch out into expenditure of the kind at a time when their incomes are much reduced, and the worse the famine the more reluctant they are likely to be. Altogether about a lakh and a quarter were advanced in this district and perhaps Rs. 75,000 more were spent in private works; but such works were apt to be carried on fitfully and the employment given was altogether disproportioned to the distress. Such works do not in my opinion lessen in the least the necessity for relief works. These must be large works. A large number of small works cannot be efficiently managed.

I dissent very strongly from the views expressed by Mr. Higham in paragraphs 29 and 30 of his Final Report that there is "no evidence that the people cannot be induced to attend large works at a distance from their homes when others are not provided close at hand" and "that in future famines we may contemplate the employment of relief workers at a greater distance from their homes than has hitherto been the general practice." It is no argument to say as Mr. Higham does, that people will go to relief-works 30, 40, or 50 miles from their homes and that most relief works included a considerable number of people from a distance who lived upon the works. It is quite true that many will travel these distances to a relief-work, but what has to be considered is whether the bulk of the distressed population will do so. I assert most unhesitatingly that they will *not*. I have frequently attempted to induce people obviously starving to seek employment on a relief-work 15 or 20 miles distant, but never with success. It is not the journey that is objected to, nor the accommodation on the works. The people have the strongest objection to leaving their homes. The reluctance to do so is not difficult to understand. The natives of this country are strongly attached to their homes. The houses moreover of those who leave the village are often pulled down by the malguzar or by their neighbours and their land if they have any given to others. There seems also to be a sort of fatalism in the minds of the people, a conviction that it is their destiny to starve and that it is useless to contend with it. There is also the fear (very strong in this district) that they will be transported sooner or later to the tea gardens of Assam. The popular ignorance is very great and no arguments can overcome it. I have before now found myself looked upon with suspicion on this score by people who knew perfectly well who I was. This is no doubt a local and temporary ground of objection, but I am strongly of opinion that it is not possible to induce more than a small percentage of the distressed population of a village or tract to seek relief upon a distant work.

Mr. Higham remarks with great truth (paragraph 34) that it is "by village inspections that we must ascertain the extent to which the works meet or fail to meet the demand for employment"; and again, "constant village inspections and scrutinies of village relief lists will probably afford the best means of testing the efficacy of all branches of relief

administration, including that of relief-works." In the first remark quoted, Mr. Higham is speaking of an unlimited piece-work system, but the remark is equally true of relief-works generally. Under an ideal system of relief-works, if such could be devised, the village relief lists would include none but the permanently incapable, and the efficacy of a relief-work system may be gauged by the extent to which the villages are found to contain people whose incapacity to work is due to the effects of privation. Where such cases are numerous it is clear that the employment given has not been sufficient.

The essential requisites in my opinion are that works should be started sufficiently early, that is before the people have begun to lose strength, and in sufficient numbers, it being recognized that each relief-work can only serve a limited area. This area must differ in different parts of the country. Much would depend on the nature of the country, on the density of population and the severity of the distress. In the open parts of Bilaspur in a famine such as we have just experienced I think that the average area should not exceed a tract 15 miles square (225 square miles). The area of the open part of the district is about 4,500 square miles, and the population about 936,000 (208 to the square mile). The scale suggested would give 20 works, each showing an average population of 46,800. These should be supplemented by private works. I do not suppose that any system of relief however timely and complete, would ever entirely prevent emaciation and suffering. The apathy of the people and the indisposition to meet halfway the efforts made for their relief is so great, that I believe it hopeless to look for such a result. But I think that a timely opening of relief-works and their rapid extension as distress deepens would go far towards attaining it.

In the accounts of the famine in Chhattisgarh in 1868-69 written by the local officers (answers to questions of the Famine Commission prepared for the Central Provinces by Dr. Barter and Mr. Nicholls) I find frequent mention of the extraordinary apathy and unwillingness to leave their homes evinced by the people. In this respect therefore it is evident that there has been no change in the past thirty years.

The migratory habits of the Chhatisgarh peasantry were noticed by these officers and by the Settlement Officer (paragraphs 343 to 345 of the Settlement Report of 1869), but neither then nor now were these habits of much assisstance in inclining the people to come to distant relief works. Indeed the habit itself has become much less marked with the disappearance of the old custom of periodically re-distributing the village lands, to which it probably owed its origin.

I do not think that any system of relief works will be successful which fails to make due allowance for the essential peculiarities in the character of the people to which I have referred.

With regard to the management of relief works, I have not much to say. I never found in this district that the works attracted many who were not in need of relief except perhaps at the very last, nor have I heard an opinion to this effect expressed. The system in force worked well when supervised by capable Sub-Divisional Officers. I agree with Mr. Higham that the management of relief-works should rest with Public Works Department officers. The Deputy Commissioner should exercise a general supervision. On such points as the extent to which employment is needed and the tracts where it is needed, it is evident that the Deputy Commissioner is best qualified to judge. I do not think that the Public Works Department should decide whether a work in any particular tract should be carried on by piece-work or task-work, or when one system should be substituted for the other. In my opinion the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner should decide this. With the general conclusion that in the early stages of a famine piece-work will provide sufficient relief I agree. Admission to the works must be unrestricted. The rise or fall of the numbers employed afford a valuable indication of the extent of the demand for employment.

Test works in this district proved of no value as an indication of distress. One was opened early in October 1896 in a distressed area. The numbers after rising to 1,500 melted away and the work was closed early in November. This may have been due to the harvest, though the poor harvest of that year did not give a large amount of employment. Another work was opened at the beginning of November in what was probably the most distressed part of the district. At the end of December I found only about 150 people at work although distress was then beginning to be severely felt and cases of emaciation in the surrounding villages were not uncommon. It was not until nearly a month later that the numbers rose to 500. The system at the time of my visit was one of daily labour; there were no gangs and no tasks were exacted. Although, therefore, there was no real "test" the work did not draw. I mention the case to show that too much reliance must not be placed on the results of so-called "test works."

(2).—Gratuitous relief.

(*a*) *Village-relief.*

The numbers on gratuitous relief of all kinds reached their maximum about the end of September. They then amounted to about 9·15 per cent. of the population of the district, of which 7·8 were on village relief. The people relieved were chiefly agricultural labourers and poor tenants. Out of 91,018 persons on village relief at that period, 16,287 were men, 36,196 were women and 38,535 were children. There were practically no *parda-nashin* women receiving relief. I would not give relief to an incapable person having an able-bodied relative bound to support him unless the incapable person showed in his condition that he was not receiving sufficient food. In such a case I would give relief even if the able-bodied relative refused to go to the relief-works. Gratuitous relief at home was not at all popular at first.

The preparation of the lists caused a veritable panic, many of the people enlisted absconding for days. One old woman who had been given a dole insisted on returning it to the Tahsildar some days later. This sort of thing did not of course last long and in a short time the system became sufficiently popular. The numbers gratuitously relieved at their houses were larger probably in this district than in any other. The numbers on the 15th May were about 15,000, on the 30th June 36,000, on the 15th August 64,000 and on the 30th September 91,000. After this the figures fell rapidly.

The death-rate was very high during the whole of this period, and the number relieved was certainly not excessive. It probably would not have risen so high had a larger number of relief-works been opened at an early period. The lists of recipients were drawn up in the first instance by the patwari, a fresh list being prepared each month as changes were very numerous.

The distribution was effected by Revenue Inspectors (pay R30 to R40). These men used to assemble all the poorer residents of the village, strike out any who did not deserve relief and add any others who might appear deserving. They paid the allowances direct to the recipients as far as possible. If their attendance could not be secured it was paid to the mukaddam. Distribution went on throughout the month, and it was enjoined that about 30 days should elapse before the same village was again visited.

Advances (sometimes large) were made to the Inspectors sufficient to cover a month's expenditure. The doles were from R2-8-0 downwards in the hot weather. In June, as prices rose, they were raised to R3 and downwards. In October and November these rates were twice reduced. The composition of the lists was checked by Tahsildars and Special Famine Officers, who also called the applicants before them and questioned them as to the receipt of the money. Up to the monsoon there was on an average one Inspector for 100 villages. This included Additional Inspectors on R25. These men were selected from among the patwaris. At this time there were seven Famine Officers with an average charge of 430 villages each. In the monsoon the number of Inspectors was increased, each man having from 75 to 85 villages each. At this time there were nine Famine Officers working, the circles averaging about 390 villages. They were assisted both in the hot weather and rains by Tahsildars, two in each of the three tahsils (including Additional Tahsildars). Up to the rains the rule was strictly enforced that no one fit for even very light work should be relieved.

In the monsoon, owing to the very bad condition of the people and the difficulty in reaching the works, this rule was not strictly enforced. Seventy-five or 80 per cent. of the people relieved throughout were people whose incapacity to work was due to privation. Kitchens at which cooked food is given were not much frequented (although one was) by grown up people on account of caste prejudices. They are however of very great use for children. There were a few cases in which the people paid small sums to the mukaddam or the kotwar. I do not recollect any detected case of payments to patwaris.

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There were also cases of malguzars extorting the whole or nearly the whole dole in satisfaction of arrears of rent. Gratuitous relief of this kind was given entirely in money. I have no experience of grain doles. The order was that the Inspectors were to make payments in the villages in which the people lived, but this order was sometimes disobeyed.

(*b*).—*Poor-houses.*

The population of the four poor-houses amounted on the 31st July to 7,763. This was the highest number reached. The largest was at Bilaspur, which at one time contained about 4,000 inmates. The inmates consisted of low caste people. The condition on admission was extremely bad and mortality was high. There was great reluctance to enter the poor-house. A large number of wanderers were brought in by the Police or by the road-patrol organized for this purpose. Many came in of their own accord. The ration is, I think, sufficient, but had to be varied or supplemented in the great majority of cases owing to the emaciated condition of the people.

Sago and milk, alternating with soup, were commonly given. The endeavours to get work out of the inmates were not very successful; many however were made use of when building or alteration had to be done or in doing menial work connected with the institution. The inmates were not free to leave when they chose, but escapes were somewhat numerous.

(*c*).—*Relief-centres.*

Two relief-centres on one of the main roads were open for some months. These were intended for the relief of starving wanderers. A few others were opened preliminary to the starting of the village relief system. When that was in proper working order they were closed.

The attendance tended to become very large, and had they been open longer this might have caused an epidemic. I have not much experience of relief-centres, but what I saw, of them did not incline me in their favour, unless where they are confined to the relief of wanderers.

(*d*).—*Relief Kitchens.*

Kitchens for the relief of children are, I think, very necessary and did an immense amount of good in the late famine. The rule was that any child in poor condition might be fed. Kitchens require a good deal of supervision, which it is somewhat difficult to maintain. There was usually a schoolmaster or *gomashta* in charge, but the aid of the malguzar was always enlisted. Sometimes *punchayets* were formed. They were often visited by Famine Officers and Tahsildars.

Parents cannot be trusted to spend money doles on their children.

V.—Loans to Cultivators and Landlords.

Loans for cattle and seed were made to the extent of about R1,08,000 to cultivators. Loans for works were made to the extent of about R1,25,000 chiefly to malguzars. None were professedly made for subsistence. Of the loans for works the greater part was actually spent on works. The period of recovery for these loans was seven years for tanks and four years for embankments. These loans were free of interest and were subject to the remission of one-fifth of the principal if properly applied. I think if a longer term of repayment had been allowed it would have been possible to advance more.

VI.—Suspensions and Remissions of Revenue.

A little over 3 lakhs of rupees (including cesses) was suspended. This will be collected in three years in six equal instalments. There is no legal power to suspend rent, but this suspension of revenue was made conditional on the suspension of rents. The total annual demand amounts to R6,15,453 including cesses and patwari cess. The following are the registration details for the past five years:—

Sale deeds.	Number of instruments.	Value.	Area.
		R	Acres.
1893-94	258	1,12,319	20,886
1894-95	400	1,66,908	37,442
1895-96	499	1,56,219	13,422
1896-97	607	1,53,127	25,603
1897-98 (10 months)	855	2,17,371	64,169

Mortgage deeds.	Number of instruments.	Value.	Area.
1893-94	179	1,16,576	42,232
1894-95	242	1,55,009	68,850
1895-96	330	2,03,308	70,616
1896-97	408	2,18,561	85,432
1897-98 (10 months)	484	2,41,249	91,354

The receipts from General (Document) Stamps have been as under:—

	R
1893-94	15,537
1894-95	16,975
1895-96	19,542
1896-97	22,666
1897-98 (10 months)	19,091

VII.—Forests.

The forests were opened early in March for the removal of jungle fruits and roots; grass and fuel could also be removed by head and *kawar* (banghy) loads. They were not opened for free grazing as this was not considered necessary.

There are very extensive grazing grounds outside the Government forests and there was never any scarcity of fodder. I think removal of grass and fuel might have been allowed by cart as well as by head and *kawar* loads. The markets are distant and it did not pay to remove in such small quantities.

VIII.—Emigrants and Wanderers.

Advances for the relief of starving wanderers were given to the Police, and these people were forwarded by them to the poor-houses or to a relief-work if they were fit for work. The number of these wanderers was considerable. They consisted of agricultural labourers and small tenants, not of jungle people. The jungly parts of the district were not so severely distressed and the people there maintained themselves with fruits, berries and roots as well as by their bows and arrows. From July to October the principal roads were patrolled twice a week in each direction by a special establishment provided with doolies to bring in starving people. Police patrols were also strengthened with the same object. The greater number of the people belonged to this district. Some were from neighbouring Feudatory States or from the Raipur District.

IX.—Mortality.

The ratio of deaths per thousand in the five years 1891—95 was as follows:—

	From all causes.	Deducting deaths from cholera.
1891	25·65	24·62
1892	39·17	30·83
1893	23·93	23·88
1894	28·57	28·09
1895	26·45	25·96

The ratio in 1896 and 1897 was as follows:—

1896	47·54	36·55
1897	96·10	87·44

I may note that up to and including January 1897 mortality statistics were compiled only for the Khalsa portions of the district including a population of 827,433. In calculating the ratio for 1897 therefore I have excluded January's figures. The figures for 1897 therefore are for the entire district (February to December).

X.—Population.

The population of the district in 1871 amounted to 715,398, and in 1881 to 1,017,327. In 1891 the population was 1,164,158. As already remarked, vital statistics were only compiled for a portion of the district up to 1896, of which the population at the census of 1891 was 827,433

The number of births and deaths in this part of the district since 1891 are as under :—

	Births.	Deaths.	
1891	30,289	16,929	(From 1st March the census having been taken at end of February.)
1892	29,273	32,411	(Cholera 6,829.)
1893	30,194	19,797	
1894	32,550	23,477	
1895	30,901	21,885	
1896	28,745	39,338	(Cholera 9,094.)
TOTAL	181,954	153,837	

Excess of births over deaths 28,117. There was therefore an increase of 33·98 per mille in the population of the Khalsa. I append a statement showing the birth and death-rates and also the number of births and deaths from 1871 to 1866. The average birth-rate for the ten years 1871 to 1880 is 38·97, that for the ten years 1881 to 1890 is 40·79 and that for the six years 1891 to 1896 is 42·78. The birth-rate would thus appear to be increasing. The death-rate is much affected by cholera in certain years, but the averages for the same years are 27·95, 28·85 and 31·85, so that the death-rate would appear to be increasing also. It is not improbable however that reporting has improved.

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Statement showing the Birth and Death-rates, and also the number of Births and Deaths from 1871 to 1896.

Year.	Births.	Ratio per 1,000.	Excess.	Excess of births per 1,000.	Deaths.	Ratio per 1,000.
1871	14,402	30·1	7,636	16	6,766	14·1
1872	12,791	26·75	3,048	6·37	9,743	20·38
1873	15,918	31·86	6,652	13·31	9,266	18·55
1874	16,941	32·78	5,372	10·39	11,569	22·38
1875	17,751	34·35	2,118	4·09	15,633	30·25
1876	21,534	41·67	7,938	15·36	13,596	26·31
1877	23,311	45·11	12,398	24	10,913	21·11
1878	21,782	42·15	16	·03	21,766	42·12
1879	25,491	49·33	—1,554	—3·01	27,045	52·34
1880	28,778	55·69	12,137	23·49	16,641	32·20
1881	30,521	59·07	16,221	31·40	14,300	27·67
1882	30,677	41·12	9,091	12·19	21,586	28·93
1883	28,645	37·61	7,148	9·38	21,497	28·23
1884	31,475	41·33	11,793	15·48	19,682	25·85
1885	32,484	42·66	8,726	11·46	23,758	31·20
1886	28,773	37·79	5,444	7·15	23,329	30·64
1887	31,861	41·84	12,713	16·70	19,148	25·14
1888	30,081	39·50	7,559	9·92	22,522	29·58
1889	24,188	31·76	—7,133	—9·37	31,321	41·13
1890	26,829	35·23	11,462	15·05	15,367	20·18
1891	33,041	43·39	13,508	17·74	19,533	25·65
1892	29,273	35·38	—3,138	—3·79	32,411	39·17
1893	30,194	36·49	10,397	12·56	19,797	23·93
1894	32,550	39·34	9,073	10·97	23,477	28·37
1895	30,901	37·34	9,016	10·89	21,885	26·45
1896	28,745	34·74	—13,508	—12·80	39,338	47·54

XI.—FOOD-STOCKS AND PRICES.

I have already commented on prices. Trade up to February was almost entirely in an outward direction, from March chiefly in an inward direction, though exportation continued up to April. From May exports were nominal. The trade is principally in the hand of Kachhis and Borahs from Bombay. Most of the landowners and some of the cultivators held considerable surplus stocks throughout the famine, though of course less than at ordinary times. Wherever private works were in progress wages were paid in grain. I never heard in any part of any difficulty in buying grain. One malguzar and grain-lender was for some time selling grain at 5½ seers which he had accumulated at 25. It was only in one very distressed tract in the extreme north that any importation of seed (*dhan*) occurred. Elsewhere importation was for food only. In the Settlement Report of 1891 I find the following evidences of increased prosperity recounted :—

(*a*) The people are more comfortably housed than they used to be.

(*b*) A much larger percentage wear decent clothes than at the last Settlement (1869).

(*c*) The precious metals are much more worn than at the last Settlement.

(*d*) At the last Settlement the water vessels were almost exclusively earthen. Brass vessels have now been substituted to a very great extent.

The increased number of cattle and carts are also quoted.

(*President.*)—When did you go to Bilaspur?—In November 1896.

Whom did you relieve?—Mr. Womack. Mr. Gaskin held charge of the district during a short interval.

What sort of rice harvest had you?—Very poor; it was returned at four annas, but in many places the outturn was almost *nil*.

In 1895?—It was better than 1896: something like six annas, I think.

In 1894?—Fourteen or fifteen annas.

The question of relief was then raised after the harvest of 1895?—I am not sure.

When you came in November had any relief measures been started?—Three relief works had been started, but they hardly attracted any workers.

What were they?—Road-works and earth-works, one in charge of the Department of Public Works (Mr. Harriott),

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of the other two one was managed by the Tahsildar on behalf of the District Council, the other by the Municipal Committee of Bilaspur.

Were they ordinary Public Works Department works or special test works?—They were supposed to be test works. The order was to manage them on the famine relief system. The wages paid were 1½ annas to 1¾ annas.

You think they did not draw?—No, they failed to draw. One was closed early in November before I joined, as the workers all left, and the other one at the end of November. There were about 150 people on the latter (the municipal work).

Any more?—The *Pandaria* work continued; in January we had about 500 workers, while in March and April the numbers went up to 5,000 on that one work.

Was this the only work at that time?—Other works were started meantime, that is, between January and April, two in January and one in March.

Did they draw?—Yes.

On the task-work system?—Yes.

When was piece-work introduced?—In July.

Did the numbers go on increasing in April and May?—They rose to a certain limit.

There was some misunderstanding of a Circular, was there not?—Yes.

What was the proper meaning of that order?—It directed that when the number on a certain work had reached 5,000 or 6,000, another work was to be started, but it did not mean that when this number was reached, fresh applicants were to be rejected. The Public Works Department subordinate officers construed it to mean that no more than five or six thousand were to be admitted and refused admittance to all others. This misunderstanding was detected about the end of May.

Was it not your business as Deputy Commissioner to order the opening of as many works as were required?—I did send up lists of works which I thought ought to be started; but I believe there was some difficulty about staff. I was not authorized to order works to be opened.

When did the numbers fall off. Was it in June?—We had about 29,000 on the 15th of June, 28,000 at the end of June, and in the middle of July, 35,000.

What was it at the end of May?—30,000.

When was piece-work introduced?—In July.

Were any works closed?—No.

What was the effect of piece-work?—It was introduced very gradually, and on some works only to a small extent. It had no appreciable effect on the works.

Did you pay them the D wage maximum without a minimum?—Yes, for a short time. It was decided that the district was too distressed to have this system in force.

Is there *rabi* in Bilaspur?—A good deal in the south-west parts of the district, but very little in seven-eighths of the district.

Did the tenants and small cultivators come to the relief works?—Yes, to a considerable extent.

Was there large loss of cattle?—No, but a certain number were killed by Chamars (Satnamis) for food.

You say in your written evidence that in February 1895 in the Damoh district, cases of emaciation were not uncommon; you did not join at Bilaspur till November 1896. Did not such cases attract attention?—Yes, some emaciated persons were seen in large bazars and a few in the villages in the extreme west of the district. Reports on the subject were submitted from time to time.

When were village relief operations started?—The lists were ready in February and the distribution began in March. Money was sent to almost all parts in that month.

(*Mr. Holderness*)—Village relief began in March. Was it not rather late?—Yes, I now think it should have begun earlier.

What was the cause of the delay?—I could not start on my own authority. We were waiting orders.

Was the number of Circle Inspectors increased?—Yes. I applied for more men in March or April; we put one additional inspector in each circle.

How many circles?—Fourteen or fifteen.

Did they endeavour to get people to work?—No.

Did they instruct able-bodied men to go to the works?—No; but it was well known that these works were opened. The tahsildars had orders to induce the people to go to them.

Was the number of Tahsildars increased?—Yes; in two tahsils in February and in the third in May.

Did the Public Works Department prevent people from going to the works at this time?—Yes; they were refusing to accept people owing to the misunderstanding referred to above.

You had relief centres?—Yes, not many; they were scattered. I opened them as a temporary measure.

Were they found useful?—Yes, they afforded a certain amount of relief to a certain number of people.

When did you open poor-houses?—In Bilaspur they were opened early in October 1896 and at three other places about the same time.

Were they supported by private persons?—Partly; they were taken over by Government in January and February.

Did you open others afterwards?—One other was opened in March.

Did the numbers in the poor-houses rise?—Yes, the numbers rose at Bilaspur to above 4,000.

Did you weed the poor-houses of strong men and draft them on to the works?—Yes, we always did that.

Was the mortality high?—Yes, very.

People who came in an emaciated condition generally died?—Yes, mostly.

In addition to Public Works Department works had you works executed by loans?—Yes, loans to the extent of R1,25,000 were made to malguzars for works.

How many works had you before the rains?—By the beginning of June nine works and by the middle of August fifteen.

You have said that there was a delay on the part of the Public Works Department in opening works. Do you think this delay augmented distress?—Well, if the works had been opened earlier the people would not have deteriorated to the extent they did.

You consequently increased gratuitous relief in excess of works?—Yes, very largely. The people were emaciated and unable to work.

Earlier they would have been able to work?—Yes.

But was there no great disinclination on the part of the people to go to work?—No, unless the work was a long way off.

If works were opened nearer homes, would they have gone?—Yes, nearly half of the village including the cultivators used to go if the work was at their doors.

The number of cultivators on the works was small, was it not?—No, it was often considerable.

What part of the district suffered most?—The western part of the district was most affected, and suffered most.

When did the mortality become high?—It rose in May, went on increasing in June, and continued increasing till August. It began to fall in September.

What steps did you take to check this?—Village relief was increased, greater and more careful supervision was exercised in giving relief, and the Civil staff was strengthened.

To what extent would you prevent mortality if you had famine again?—I suppose there would be abnormal mortality even with plenty of works, but more works would have materially lessened mortality.

Was gratuitous relief popular?—Yes, it was popular later on; in the beginning it was unpopular.

Was there any difficulty in distributing money-doles?—No. The distribution was made by the Revenue Inspectors.

What did the people do when they did not get their money-doles?—They lived on berries, fruits, roots, &c. They had some small resources of their own.

Did they come in search of the Inspectors to get their doles?—No.

How was this money distribution regulated?—I fixed it at R2-8 for a man, and R2-4 for a woman, subject to the maximum of R6 to R7 for a family.

You say in your written note, out of 91,018 persons on village relief, 16,287 were men, 36,196, women and 38,535 were children. According to your figures the number of children relieved is nearly half, is it not?—Yes.

Then you say 80 per cent. of the total were people whose incapacity was due to privation. Does this include children?—Yes.

When did you start kitchens?—In August.

How many had you?—About 50 of them.

Were they useful?—Yes, very useful.

You think they should have been started earlier?—Yes, and had I the experience then which I have now, I would have started them much earlier.

You gave cooked food?—Yes.

Could any other destitute persons obtain relief in the kitchens?—Not in the beginning, but from July anybody wishing to be fed could go in. I am speaking of kitchens on relief works. On other kitchens it was not the rule to admit adults, but wanderers were sometimes fed.

You say in your note parents cannot be trusted to spend money-doles on children. Have you any reasons for making this remark?—I often noticed that the children who were in an emaciated condition had healthy and strong parents. It looked as if they had starved the children to feed themselves.

(*President.*)—Don't you think children show signs of privation quicker than the old people?—Yes, but I frequently saw fat mothers with terribly emaciated children, and almost invariably the children were in worse condition than their elders.

Was this also in the case of families?—Yes; I do not think the proper amount was spent on children.

What would you do in such cases?—I would refuse to relieve the father and mother, and make arrangements for the children by starting a large number of kitchens. It is true this would involve much trouble and inconvenience, and would require a very large staff, but that would be the best thing to do under the circumstances.

Don't you think in every country there are certain mothers who cannot be trusted to feed their children under similar conditions?—Perhaps; but I think generally mothers starve themselves to feed their children.

What was the money-dole for a child?—Eight annas to one rupee according to the size of the child, and R1-8 for a big child—with a maximum of R6 or R7 for a single family.

(*Mr. Younghusband.*)—During the rains higher rates were given?—Yes, we raised the rates during the rains owing to the rise of prices; we paid R3 to a man R2-12 to a woman, and to children one rupee was fixed as the lowest limit instead of 8 annas.

When the mortality was high in June and July did you notice that most of the people were "wanderers" or belonged to the wandering tribes?—Yes, a large number of wanderers were found roaming about, and so we gave advances to the Police with instructions to feed them. This was done as early as December 1896.

Did not the Police frequently bring in such wanderers and feed them?—Yes.

A good many were saved from starvation?—Yes.

Where did the Police find them, in villages or on roads?—Mostly on roads. Special araangements were made to patrol the roads to pick up such people.

They were begging on the roads?—Yes.

The Police patrol was increased?—Yes.

Did you make any suggestion as to the forcible removal of these people to poor-houses?—Yes. We had the road patrol just referred to.

Did not the people support themselves by jungle-roots?—Yes, in the jungle parts.

Was the distress severe with the jungle people?—No. They had "mahua," "achar," &c., and they lived on these during the hot months and also by their bows and arrows.

Was "mahua" sold on the works?—No.

On the works the majority were on D wage?—Yes.

What was their condition?—They took a long time to improve. On the whole, the condition of the people on the works was good.

What is your conclusion as regards the sufficiency of wages?—I think they were sufficient; we had complaints in some cases, but I did not consider them justified.

Were the children numerous?—Yes.

Were they fed in the kitchens?—Yes, the non-working children were fed in the kitchens only from July and onwards; before that they were given cash-doles as dependants.

On what date was the change made?—3rd July.

If you had another famine would you adopt this system again?—Yes, it would prevent them from falling off in condition.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—You say in your written evidence that gratuitous relief was given to over 90,000 people. What was their general condition?—Most of them were in bad condition, reduced by starvation.

Did many die from the effects of starvation?—Yes, a good many did.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Was the allowance given on gratuitous relief sufficient?—Yes, I think so.

You did not give them relief when in good condition?—No.

(*President.*)—I suppose they supplemented it?—Yes, they did.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—I see your minimum wage is more liberal; you gave 14oz. Was this *D* wage?—No, the minimum wage is the price of 14 chattaks, not ounces, for a man and 13 for a woman.

Do you, remember how many children were relieved in kitchens?—About 5,800 was the highest number fed in kitchens. This excludes Public Works Department kitchens.

Was there large mortality in the kitchens?—No, I do not think that the mortality in the kitchens was high.

They did well on the kitchen ration?—Yes, judging from their condition.

Did you give them relief according to any scale?—Yes, we were guided by the rules issued by the Jubbulpore Conference. The children were given *kitchri*.

(*President.*)—Are not kitchens more expensive?—I have never made comparison but the advantages of the kitchen should outweigh the consideration of cost.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Was medical aid sufficient?—No. We ought to have had one Hospital Assistant for each work.

Did you make use of Vaccinators and Compounders?—Yes.

Did you find them satisfactory substitutes?—Not very. Hospital Assistants are preferable.

With reference to your remarks regarding increase of population, do you think the increase is noticeable on account of improved registration, or increase in actual birth-rates?—It is very possibly owing to improved registration.

Is there room for increased population in the district. Will the food-supply be sufficient in future?—Yes; there is considerable area in the district still waiting cultivation.

There is no pressure?—No. The population in the most thickly populated parts does not exceed 220 to the square mile, while the soil is good and capable of supporting more.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—You say you agree with the general conclusion that in the early stages of a famine piece-work will provide sufficient relief. Will you propose any maximum limit of earning on piece-work?—I have not considered that point. I suppose that could be arranged by adjusting the rates at which they are to be paid.

They were earning good wages on piece-work?—Yes, generally one pice or two pice more than what those under the task-work system did.

Was anything given to dependants?—They were admitted to the kitchens if they were in poor condition.

Would you propose restricting the limit to the ordinary D wage, or would you introduce the "payment-by-results" system?—I would not limit earnings to the D wage. The system of D maximum and no minimum drove away large numbers from the works. I would have the "payment-by-results" system.

You consider that there must be a certain number of large works during famine?—Yes.

And that those large works should in your opinion be supplemented by village works?—Yes, and I would begin both early. At the same time I would not put much reliance on private works. I mean that private works alone will not suffice.

Would you try private works when large Public Works Department works are found to be insufficient?—As many private works should be started at an early stage as possible, but even with a maximum extension of private works, large Public Works Department works would be required on a scale not less, in a really bad famine such as we have just undergone, than that I have indicated in my written note.

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The people who require relief are mostly labouring classes?—Yes.

They would not object to go to some distance from their homes?—I do not think they would go readily.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—In your evidence you give the irrigated areas, and say much of that is imperfectly irrigated. How is irrigation carried out?—By tanks.

Do you think irrigation by tanks could be extended?—Yes.

Do you prefer tank-works to road-works?—No. A tank-work would employ 1,000 people; you cannot employ more on such works, and then there would be difficulties in supervision owing to the very large number of such works it would be necessary to start. I would have such works carried out by private persons with or without Government loans.

If you had large road-works and a number of small tank-works, would it do?—I have proposed a certain number of road-works. These must be supplemented by local private works.

In your note you say that the preparation of the list caused a veritable panic and many of the people enlisted absconded. Did many people from your district go to the tea gardens?—Yes, large numbers did go to the Assam tea gardens; about 4,000 were sent up by the two principal agents and perhaps as many more by coolie contractors.

Ordinarily they have a dislike to go to the tea gardens?—They are all afraid of being seized and sent up by force, but those who go, go willingly.

You spoke about parents starving children; did you observe this only among the low castes or among all castes?—Among Hindus, as well as Chamars.

When were Government relief works opened?—In January.

You distributed two lakhs from the Charitable Fund in relief works?—The officers entrusted with the Charitable Fund distributed it.

Did they not say that they wished they had more money?—Yes.

Does not that show great distress?—Perhaps so.

(*President.*)—Do you think the death returns to be more full or less full in a famine year than in an ordinary year?—I think they are not likely to be "more full" in a famine year, owing to the kotwars being themselves in a distressed condition, and so their reports are irregular.

You have in your note given us the death-rates for 11 months of 1897 (February to December). Can you give me the birth-rates for the same period?—I have not got the figures here; the birth-rate was very low.

If the staff of Circle Inspectors is strengthened, and small works opened under their supervision, and at the same time if large works were opened under the Public Works Department, do you think people would go to the large works?—I think they would, because it would be almost impossible to start a sufficient number of small works (other than private works) in a bad famine. A limit would have to be put on the number to be admitted to small works and the rest would go to the large ones.

The idea is that the cultivator has more reason to stay at home as he has cattle, etc., to look after, while the ordinary labourer should go to the big works away from the village. Don't you think a system of passes to be granted by Civil officers feasible?—Yes; but during the famine the small cultivators have hardly any cattle to look after. Practically the hardship on the labourer in having to go to a distance is just as great as to the cultivator. I do not think we should exact a distance test.

The distance test has nothing to do with the question. I mean there would be difficulty in finding work for every one nearer home?—I should hesitate to debar any one from admittance to a work on any ground. If admittance were refused to agricultural labourers because the work was near their homes I believe many would return home and starve sooner than go to a great distance. But I hesitate to pronounce on the pass system now suggested as I have not seen it tried.

Are not a certain number of agricultural labourers necessary for weeding the fields, etc.?—Yes. I doubt if the system of selection will work. The Circle Inspectors would have to decide as to who are entitled to work on small works and who should be drafted away.

Do you think the Circle Inspector could be trusted to do the work?—I do not think the kind of Circle Inspectors we have could be trusted; but their status might be improved. The present class of man might refuse to take on those whom he should.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—How are kotwars paid?—They collect certain dues in kind from the tenants and usually hold some land in the village free of rent. Government does not give them any pay.

Did you give them any special relief?—Yes, at the rate two rupees a month.

(*President*).—When was that?—From March.

Did you give relief to their families?—Sometimes they were given gratuitous relief.

Did they run down in condition?—No, occasionally their children were in poor condition.

(*Mr. Younghusband.*)—You say there was a heavy mortality among those receiving gratuitous relief. Any special reason for this?—It is very difficult to assign any particular reason.

What was their condition?—Generally very bad.

Were there not many deaths from fever in the monsoon? I do not think fever was much more prevalent than usual or that it was of an unusually deadly kind as has been suggested.

Have you any reason to assume that those who died while in receipt of gratuitous relief died of privation?—The deaths were it is true ascribed by the kotwars to fever, but I am convinced incorrectly so ascribed. When making enquiries with a view to testing the kotwars' records I found that almost all the very large number of persons whose deaths were attributed to fever had been emaciated for some time before death. A very large proportion of the large numbers in receipt of village relief were always found to be more or less badly emaciated, and many it was evident were too much so to recover.

The village-relief would show that they did not starve?—In not a few cases the people deteriorated in spite of receiving gratuitous relief.

Is it not quite possible that they may have died of fever?—I do not believe they did for the reasons already given, though possibly in some cases fever gave the finishing touch.

The Rev. Mr. J. J. Lohr, Missionary, North American German Evangelical Mission, Bisrampur, called in and examined.

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I put in a written statement of evidence.

(A).—Departures from the principles of the Central Provinces Famine Code which have occurred in the Central Provinces during the recent Famine.

I do not know of any important departure from the principles of the Central Provinces Famine Code within the comparative small compass of my observation, yet I must admit that owing to peculiar circumstances, locality, etc., etc., all the rules laid down in the Central Provinces Famine Code could not be carried out to the letter.

(B).—Degree of success which has attended the measures adopted, considered primarily with regard to the relief of distress and saving of life, and secondarily with regard to economy.

I believe that the means adopted for the relief of the distress, saving of life and regarding economy were of such a nature that where carried out conscientiously and properly were crowned with success—

(*a*) The monthly distributions of small sums of money under Section 34, Central Provinces Famine Code, have largely diminished the distress and

saved the life of thousands of the most helpless and wretched people, which otherwise would have perished, owing to the partiality, indifference and avidity of some malguzars, patwaris and kotwals. The distribution of dole money should be under the strictest control, as in many cases unworthy persons were recommended for help whereas the really needy and helpless were overlooked. Poor-houses have probably been the most beneficial and life saving institutions; unfortunately hundreds of the starving from long distances arrive at these places of refuge in a condition that the best food and diligent nursing even proved futile. Many people leaving the poor-house before having gained sufficient strength to endure the hardships of travelling, perished before they reached another poor-house to receive them. On the other side it is true that many availed themselves of this easy way of living who rather died than worked, and this sort of people have become wandering beggars and will be such for some time to come.

(*b*) Children's kitchens have been a great blessing and an effective means to save thousands of children, abandoned or lost by their parents, from certain death. The separation of the children from their parents was a great error (or evil), the father in one poor-house, the mother in another, and the children left to look out for shelter, food and clothing for themselves. Where children's kitchens were started at an early date, as in our case, the mortality among the children was comparatively small.

(*c*) Relief-centres also proved useful. No doubt undue use, however, has been often made of this institution by people who had the means to support themselves. In many cases small sums of money were found upon their persons. Many of them came to the relief centre from the nearest relief-works to take their food and save their earnings. This department is perhaps the most troublesome. The gratuitous distribution of clothing has also been a very important method to relieve distress, as even well-to-do people could not afford to buy the necessary clothing to protect themselves from the effects of wet and cold.

(*d*) To the timely distribution of seed-grain to the poor cultivators the present hopeful condition of this class of the people is to be ascribed; although, in many cases, malguzars had the means to make ample provision for their tenants, they hesitated to do so, from fear that the harvest of this year might again turn out a failure.

(C).—ADVICE AS TO THE MEASURES AND METHODS OF WORKING WHICH SEEM LIKELY TO PROVE MOST EFFECTIVE IN FUTURE IN THESE TWO RESPECTS; AND (D).—OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS OR OPINIONS THOUGHT LIKELY TO BE USEFUL IN FUTURE FAMINES.

If I am permitted to make any suggestions they would be :—

(1) To ascertain at the most possible earliest time the failure of rainfall and condition of crops and to grant help or relief at an early time before the people suffering are too weak to work or too emaciated.

(2) As much as possible to keep people in distress or need in their own villages by giving them help or relief under Section 34, Central Provinces Famine Code, if unable to work, and to start relief-works near the villages for such as can work.

(3) Gratuitous relief under Section 34, Central Provinces Famine Code, should, in my opinion, only be given in grain. Eighty to 90 seers of grain, dhan or kodo, per month is quite enough for a family of two persons. The number of persons requiring such help in each village should be ascertained by a Supervising Officer of the superior grade, to prevent the malguzars, mukaddams, etc., entering names of such who actually do not require any help. Grain in most cases could be got in each village from some wealthy tenants or the malguzar, and should be measured out every 8 or 15 days to the poor, a close check being kept.

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(4) Grain so given might as much as possible be recovered again (even if it would take a few years) by Government from the recipients, and such recovered grain might be kept in the village or at some other central place under the care or in charge of some trustworthy person, and could be made use of in case of distress in the village on account of failure of crops or in famine.

(5) Children's kitchens should, I believe, be opened at an early time and in more numerous places than last year, so as not to compel the children to go too far in search of food.

(6) Relief centres and poor-houses might be more used for the actual travellers and beggars; the taking of people out of villages in relief centres and poor-houses discouraged, and if any come to send them to their homes and help them in their villages.

(7) Emigration from famine districts to districts in distress if possible prevented.

(8) Induce respectable and trustworthy persons to voluntarily assist Government in either taking charge or managing children's kitchens, poor-houses, relief-centres, etc.

(*President.*)—You are a resident of Bisrampur?—Yes.

Whereabouts is the boundary of the District?—About 37 miles from Raipur.

May I ask to what communion you belong?—The German Evangelical Senate of North America.

What work did you take up in the famine?—We had private poor-houses, and there was a relief centre at Bisrampur. I was distributing money in the villages under section 34 of the Famine Code.

Were you there in 1895?—Yes.

In 1895 was the district in the ordinary state of prosperity?—Yes.

What were the harvests in 1896 like?—In some parts of the district they were not as good as in other parts, but still I would not exactly call it distress in Raipur.

When did you begin to see that there was great distress?—About the end of July 1896.

How did it show itself?—The people came in asking for food, and at the same time our agricultural cultivators had hardly any harvests, and they suffered in that way.

Was that due to the failure of the previous kharif harvest?—Yes.

The next harvest also failed?—The next failed entirely; there were only two and four-anna crops.

It was then that relief measures were begun?—Yes, at once.

Nothing was done before the second failure?—Very little.

Should something have been done in July 1896?—We thought so. We did as much as we were able to do.

After the failure of the second harvest works were begun?—Yes.

Were they near you?—Quite near, relief works at Bhatapara.

Did the people come to them in great numbers?—Not at the beginning, but after the harvests were over they did.

(*Mr. Younghusband.*)—You are referring to the Bilaspur District?—Yes.

(*President.*)—Was there anything in the nature of the works to keep people off, or did they merely dislike to go?—They disliked to go to the works.

Did any of your Christian villagers go?—Yes, they did.

Have your converts been from the Satnami class?—Yes, most of them.

Did you see many cases of mortality from starvation?—I could not say exactly starvation. I saw many dead bodies. We had charge of poor-houses, and we asked people to come there and to relief works, but they preferred often to die on the road.

Had you much fever in 1897?—We had a good deal of fever, typhoid, remittent, and intermittent.

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Was that in August and September 1897?—Later on, in October and November 1897.

Was there anything peculiar about the character of the fever?—Not that we noticed.

Was it not contagious?—No, I don't think so.

I see you recommend relief works being started near the villages. Don't you think that in another famine people would have learnt something from experience and be ready to go to distant big works?—Well, I am only expressing my opinion; I know the Satnamis do not like to go a great distance away and leave their villages. I think they would rather take work near.

The question is whether they would go to distant works or stay in their villages till they got emaciated?—Well, I think they would rather stay than go to distant works in many cases.

You don't think any exhortation by the Tahsildar or other officials would help?—That would help no doubt.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Was more of that necessary than was actually done in the present famine?—Yes.

Do you think it should have been done more generally?—Yes.

(*President.*)—Was the supply of grain in the country always plentiful?—Grain could always be bought if a person had money to offer for it. We could buy it in the villages.

Without trouble?—No, it was rather expensive, but still we could get it.

The banias did not close their shops?—We seldom got it from the banias. We got it from the malguzar.

They had stores?—Yes.

Did they sell generally to other people?—They did if they got a good price.

Did the banias also sell?—Yes, but I got it from the malguzar.

Did you get it cheaper from the malguzar?—Yes, I did.

You say children's kitchens should be opened at an early time and in more numerous places than last year, so as not to compel the children to go too far in search of food. What distance did you see children going?—I saw a number of children going from 5 to 8 miles.

Did they go back in the evening?—Some stayed under the shade of trees. Afterwards we had to compel them to go back.

What were their parents doing?—They were in the villages.

To what class did these people belong?—They were mostly Chamars and Gondhs, lower classes generally.

What was the age of the children who came alone?—Between 8 and 10 years of age.

You helped to distribute the dole, did you not?—Yes.

Had you any reason to think that the parents appropriated the dole and stinted their children?—I think so. I have seen quite a number of cases where the parents actually took it from the children and misused it. I noticed that the parents in some cases saved up the money, and told the children to go to the kitchen.

What were they saving the money against?—It was saved for different things, to pay up old debts sometimes.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Does the agricultural labourer get good wages for harvest?—Yes, I believe so.

Is he paid in grain in the villages?—In a good harvest always in grain.

Did they accumulate grain for some time?—Yes.

For a month or two?—Yes.

I suppose that failed them this time?—Yes.

Have you been long in the district?—Thirty years.

Has the railway made a difference in prices?—It has raised them.

What prices do you remember?—In the famine of 1869 I myself bought 40 *katees* of *dhan* for a rupee, that would be about three or four times as much as we can get now.

Did the people keep large stocks of grain?—Yes.

How?—In *kotis* made of mud or thatch.

Unhusked?—Yes.

Now are their stocks kept?—Not as much as in those days.

Do outside grain merchants come to the district to buy?—Yes, months before harvest time.

Do you think the people have gained anything by the opening of the railway?—In one respect; they can sell their grain dearer now and get more money.

That is the bigger men?—Yes.

How about the smaller agriculturist. Has he improved by the line?—Yes in many respects. He gets better wages than before.

In cash or in kind?—In grain.

Has the labourer's wage been increased?—Yes.

Is there any improvement in the condition of the people?—Yes.

How is it shown?—In their way of living. They eat better food, they dress better, and their houses are in better condition.

You are speaking generally of all classes?—Yes.

Do you remember the famine of 1869?—Yes.

Was that a serious famine?—Yes.

As bad as this?—No, not at all. We could get 16 seers of grain for the rupee.

Was the failure of crops as great?—I think so.

The difference between this famine and the one of 1869 is the fact that prices are much higher now?—Yes, and then in some parts the villages did have a little harvest. In this the famine was more general.

In this famine was grain going out of the district?—Very little.

Did any come in from Burma?—Yes.

Did it find its way to the villages?—Yes.

In the establishment of kitchens for children was it necessary to have any class distinction in order to feed children at different places by different people?—I don't think so in time of famine. The people say Government's punishment and God's punishment are judgments which they have to undergo, and that these do not take away their caste for ever.

Did you have anything to do with the distribution of the Charitable Relief Fund?—Yes.

Was much spent in the way of clothes?—Yes.

Was as much spent as was necessary?—Just as much as was necessary. In many cases I have noticed the women sold their clothes.

How did you choose the people who were to be clothed?—I went round the village from house to house, and after seeing the people, gave it to those that I thought necessary.

Was most of the money spent on relieving agricultural labourers?—Yes.

Is it a good form of relief?—Yes.

Would you prefer to spend more money on clothes?—More on agriculturists than on clothes.

(*President.*)—As regards these people who sold their clothes, had they any objection to the kind of clothes?—No.

Did they sell them with the expectation of getting more?—Yes.

Were they in want of clothes?—Yes. Even those who were better off, as a rule, required clothes.

Did the children suffer from want of clothes?— Yes, I noticed they did.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Has village charity commenced again?—Yes, it stopped entirely, but has now begun again.

The people who were on gratuitous relief are now being supported?—Yes.

Do you think the people are recovering from the famine?—Yes, I am afraid though that in a month or two we will have a good number of the poorer classes in our poor-houses again. As soon as the grain is taken up there will be hardly anything left for the poor ones. If the rich ones put the grain away they never break their habit of keeping it stored.

Have they had a fair harvest?—Yes.

Do you think the people had little stores before the famine which they have not now?—Yes.

Even the agricultural labourers?—Yes.

Did they make anything during the harvest?—Not very much this year.

(*President*).—Do you think the agricultural labourers had any property to sell when the scarcity began?—Very little.

Any jewels, do you think?—Some of them perhaps a few rupees worth.

As regards the merchants who buy the grain, how many months in advance of the harvest do they come?—About 2 months I think: I am not quite sure. *Rev. Mr. J. J. Lohr.* *11th Mar. 1898.*

Do the cultivators under this system receive very much less do you suppose than if they had waited till the harvest was ready for the market?—I don't think so.

They don't sell very much below the market prices?—No.

Rai Sahib SETH KAPURCHAND, of Raipur, Agent of Rao Bahadur Bansilal Abirchand, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence. *Rai Sahib Seth Kapurchand.* *11th Mar. 1898.*

I beg to submit a brief statement of the proposed evidence which I am required to give before the Famine Commission. At the outset I beg to submit that my actual experience of famine relief operations in the district is mostly confined to the town of Raipur, and I am not in a position to offer practical criticism or suggestions in respect of subjects grouped as A, B, C and D, and specified in paragraph 4 of letter No. 81, dated the 18th January 1898, from the Secretary to the Indian Famine Commission, to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces. I venture, however, to submit a few general observations and answers to some of the questions which have been drawn up by the Commission for the guidance of the witnesses.

2. I have no remarks to offer on Head A. As regards B, it is unquestionably true that the various relief measures adopted by Government were eminently successful in alleviating human suffering and saving lives. Were it not for the large relief-works under the Public Works Department, minor village works (such as tanks, &c.), establishment of poor-houses at central places, kitchens and relief-centres at convenient and suitable places and extension of village relief the mortality from actual starvation or privation would have been very much greater than it really has been.

3. *Under Head C.*—I would suggest that as far as possible a complete and systematic programme of local or village relief works be prepared beforehand for each tahsil in consultation with local officers and malguzars possessing intimate knowledge of local requirements. If such a scheme were drawn up and matured beforehand, useful works could be opened at short notice and labour utilized to the public benefit.

4. *Under Head D.*—The only recommendation under this head that I venture to submit is that for effective supervision over the distribution of gratuitous relief in villages and local works which it may become necessary to start in large numbers, the present circles of Revenue Inspectors would seem to demand a further sub-division. A large number of officers of the grade of Superintendent of Land Records, &c., is also necessary for better supervision over the duties of patwaris and Revenue Inspectors.

5. I now proceed to give answers to some of the questions set by the Commission.

*2 and 3 (*b*). The last famine was in my opinion due to the local failure of the rains and of the harvest and to antecedent high prices. The high prices were again due to large exports to other districts and provinces consequent upon prevailing scarcity in those parts.

15. The mortality during the past year has no doubt been in excess of the normal, but I am not prepared to say that it could have been prevented by more timely or extensive measures. The local officers were vigilant from the very outset and all measures necessary for the saving of human life were adopted from the earliest date.

27. Gratuitous relief was given partly through the medium of poor-houses where residence was compulsory, but such a relief was also given in extensive scale to persons entitled to it in their homes in cash and also doles of grain.

48. Of the measures of relief the famine loans and takavi loans were most appreciated by the malguzars; works (road, &c.) were appreciated by the labouring classes.

(The witness gave his evidence in the vernacular.)

(*President.*)—What work did you take up in the famine?—Poor-house relief. I saw to all the arrangements, etc., in connection with the dieting of the poor.

What class of people came in to the poor-houses?—Chamars, Gondhs and a few Telees.

Did the Gondhs only come when they were in very great need?—Yes, when they were absolutely starving.

What amount of food did they receive?—Men got 9 chattaks, the women 8, and children 4. This was afterwards increased, and the people got fed morning and evening.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—Were you on the Local Charitable Committee?—Yes.

You opened shops for the poor?—Yes.

How did your rates compare with the bazaar rates?—While the bazaar rates were 7 seers, we sold at 10.

How did you select the people for relief?—We had full enquiries made and had a very careful selection.

How many did you assist daily?—About 150 or so.

Did contractors incur any loss?—No.

Did they make a profit?—No, they made no profit either.

Khan Bahadur MAULAVI SAIYYID MUHAMMAD HUSAIN, Extra Assistant Commissioner, and Diwan of Khairagarh State, called in and examined.

(The witness gave his evidence in the vernacular.)

I put in a written statement of evidence. *Khan Bahadur Maulavi Saiyid Muhammad Husain.* *11th Mar. 1898.*

My experience of the late famine was confined to Khairagarh State. I followed the Central Provinces Famine Code principles, as far as I could—unless I could devise easier, better and economical methods. Some such departures were attended with good success, but others were not.

Below I enumerate some such measures, and also beg to place before the Commission my observations about the famine administration.

1. In my opinion a Special Famine Act should be passed, which should extend to the whole of British India, enforceable only at such times and in such famine-stricken districts, as may be notified in the Gazette by His Excellency the Governor-General in Council or the Local Governments. This Act shall empower, in special cases, the Local Government or District Officers, for instance—

(1) to frame rules in regard to famine, as suited to local requirements;

(2) to interfere with private trade;

(3) to force people to go from one locality to another, or prevent them from doing so;

(4) to prevent idle wanderers and beggars from roaming about or forcing them to attend relief-works or poor-houses;

(5) to give proper punishments in cases of omissions and acts contrary to the provisions thereof.

This idea has occurred to me simply because in certain cases I had to exercise such powers, as I could not have done in British India.

For example, wherever I found that anyone had a large stock of grain, over and above his requirements, I ordered its being distributed to persons in need of it—on the security of the State and at a proper rate of interest. Instead of being uselessly hoarded up it did good to some.

2. The signs of scarcity should be more fully specified in the Famine Code.

I think the following should be regarded as the signs of scarcity:—

(1) Insufficient and untimely rainfall.

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(2) Total or partial failure of crops.

(3) Increase in the fallow area under cultivation.

(4) The falling-off in the number of cultivators, traders and artizans, and a subsequent rise in that of idle wanderers or persons without apparent means of livelihood.

(5) The presence of famine in the adjoining districts or the appearance of any signs stated above. Large export of grain from this district to the other, and the migration of wanderers from that district to this.

(6) The increase in birth number among uncivilized country, and the pressure of population to such an extent that there may not be sufficient means of livelihood for them.

(7) Slow rise or no rise in the prices of grain consumed by wealthier classes of people—coupled with a sudden and continuous rise in prices of those grains consumed by the poor.

(8) Children and old persons becoming wanderers being gradually joined by others.

(9) The rise in petty thefts of grain and cattle.

Papers are prepared in every part of India to determine most of the points enumerated above, and the District Officers have numerous sources to ascertain these. Still they admit of improvement to which it is necessary to direct attention.

For instance—

(1) The patwaris should be prepared to produce with the returns a statement distinguishing the number of labourers and idle wanderers in any village from that of cultivators and other persons who may have some means of livelihood. It should show how many of the cultivators and other persons have left their trade.

(2) The quantity of all kinds of grain in stock with the people should be recorded very carefully in the crop returns. Till now, only certain kinds of grain, *i.e.*, wheat, linseed, tilli and cotton are entered. I think there is no better way of ascertaining the condition of soil, estimating the crops and giving the produce of grains, than the Land Records staff, whose returns can be relied upon, if there be a competent Superintendent of Land Records. After the seeds are sown, the returns estimating the outturn of crops are available, from time to time, and they can be verified by the District Officers and their assistants.

Causes of famine—

3. A famine is mostly due to a scanty stock of food-grains and a pressure of population. A small stock of food-grains is consequent upon a failure of crops, or an unusually large export of food-grains to other provinces, with a less import.

Reasons for a scanty produce—

(1) A low and untimely rainfall.

(2) Hailstones.

(3) Production of the crop diseases, such as *girna*, *tusar*, *agira*, etc.

(4) Appearance of such injurious insects or birds or animals as may destroy the crops.

The late famine is, in my opinion, due to the following :—

There was an abnormally low fall of rain during 1894 and 1895. In these two years the crops had failed in some parts of India, and the grains of those places which enjoyed a good crop were exported to the distressed tracts, and the food-stocks were generally exhausted. In 1896 the rainfall was irregular, and commonly there was a scanty outturn all over India. In some places the crops had entirely failed. But the Railway distributed equally the outturn during 1896 over all parts of India. Therefore there remained no food-stocks for 1897, which made it more keenly felt in the last year.

4. When famine is apprehended, the District Officer should have a Famine Committee formed in each village, consisting of the malguzars or mukaddams, or at least two sensible persons of some influence with the people. This committee should arrange for private relief works or private charity in such villages. It will decide, at the commencement of famine, as to how many disabled persons can be supported by the village community, and how many of the able-bodied can be provided with relief-works. When the number of such paupers may rise enormously they should be sent to Revenue Circle Inspectors, through and at the responsibility of this committee. If a single village is considered too small a unit for this organization and control patwari circles may be taken as units. It is true that the committee may take less interest in such matters, but the patwari should keep them together, and make them do this work. Even if the committee be only nominal, and the work is done by the patwari, it will be effectual and the common people will have a good idea of the arrangements made by Government. This system will also possibly prevent some improper practices. The Revenue Inspectors and Officers, members of the Local Board and the District Council, should supervise these committees.

In each village a list should be prepared by patwaris, with the help of this committee, showing the difference between the quality and quantity of grains required by each tenant for his agricultural needs (such as seed-grains, etc.) and the stock actually in hand. These lists should be checked by the Revenue Inspectors, and ultimately produced before the Deputy Commissioner. It will show the surplus quantity of grain in stock, and that really required by each tenant. He who has more grain than really needed for his use, should be instructed to lend it to his brethren, on the Deputy Commissioner's security. During famine periods, people always abstain from advancing grains on *badhi* because then the grains are very dear, and there is greater fear of loss. The persons who lend grains suffer loss, even at the double *badhi*. The grain should therefore be valued at the rate then prevalent, with the stipulation to repay it with an interest of 2 or 4 annas per rupee, till new crops are reaped. This list will also show how much grains are required in each village, and whether the District Officer could arrange to supply it. I had such lists prepared for two years which proved very useful. The system of causing grains to be lent was also successful? The repayment of such loans was given preference over other demands.

5. In my opinion each tenant ought to be forced to keep out of his produce a sufficient stock of grains for one year, to meet his agricultural and ordinary requirements. That the sale of such grains should be legally stopped. That such tenant should be allowed to sell only so much grain as may be saved from these requirements. I think that, like the agricultural implements and the necessary wearing apparel, the grains required for agriculture and ordinary consumption, should also be exempted from attachment by a Civil Court.

6. I think it is not proper to send able-bodied persons who refuse to work to a poor-house, as mentioned in Section 88 of the Famine Code. The result would, in my opinion, be that many such people who are capable of doing some work, will become sluggards and careless, and resort to poor-houses. I think that those who can work, should always be sent to relief works. If any of them be respectable, he should be required to do the duty of a mate or chaprasi, as laid down in the Code.

I propose the following division of distressed people :

(1) Able-bodied persons.

(2) Temporarily incapacitated from work, by emaciation, disease, etc.

(3) Sada-kangal). Permanently disabled persons such as lame, blind, lepers, or those disabled by age.

(4) Orphans.

The persons coming under Class I should, in every case be sent to relief-works.

The poor-house to accommodate persons of Class II should be situate near a relief-work, so that those who become capable may be drafted on to that relief-work. And, among able-bodied persons, those who may be temporarily disabled or weak should be admitted into the poor-house. The house for the disabled should be situate only at the head-quarters of a district, because in the course of famine there is no hope of their departure. If after famine some relative or fellow-villager may be capable of helping them, they can be sent back there. The orphans should be sent to a children's kitchen, if there be any, or be accommodated with the permanent poor.

I kept many little children, with female prisoners in the jail, who were required to look after them. Much success attended this measure.

Some very special instructions should be laid down in the Famine Code in regard to lepers or the like, who should be

separately accommodated. As far as I know, there were separate houses for lepers in most of the districts.

7. In the Famine Code special attention should be paid to the habits and customs of the distressed paupers, in regard to their food, accommodation or clothing. That in each district their treatment should be restricted to their habits. This would make them more comfortable and contented, preserve their health and save money.

For example :

To the paupers in the poor-houses of this country it would be better to give *pej*, *pasia*, *mahua*, jungly roots, etc., rather than rice, *ghi*, etc. ; instead of food, apparels and bedding, it would be better to give them firewood for warming themselves, *payal* or *tat* for sleeping, and blankets for wearing.

It would be sufficient only to choose a proper site in the relief-camps, and to get grass, leaves, *jhinjh*, etc., ready for their cottages. Moreover, it would suffice to run through them cottages or huts according to their habits.

8. Only three scales of diet have been prescribed in the Famine Code, *i.e.*, for male, female and children. This scale would be proper for estimating the total cost, but not for fixing each person's diet. In the poor-house there will be many such people, who are too weak to digest the given scale of food, and devour more quantity of food only by voracity. This gives rise to indigestion and various kinds of diseases. There will be others for whom this scale of diet will not be sufficient. Special instructions are invited on this point for the guidance of the Superintendent of the poor-house, that he might act up to the medical advice in regard to this matter.

For the different kinds of diet there should be tin or iron measures like *paili*, to hold 2 chattaks of cooked food. The Medical Officer should decide as to how many measures should be given to each. It is clear that dysentery and diarrhœa prevailed to a very large extent. I hold that it is mainly due to the fact that people could not get food according to their digestive capabilities. This method, though involving some difficulty, can save many lives. The number of dry breads for each person should be fixed by the Medical Officer.

9. There should be some instructions in the Famine Code on the clothing of paupers. In this State clothes were distributed as follows :—

Man	...	...	...	1 dhoti and 1 patka
Woman	...	...	...	2 dhotis
Child	...	...	...	2 patkas

besides the *tat* for bedding.

10. There should be some rules in regard to the burying of dead paupers. The rules given in the Code on this point are capable of modification and improvement.

11. The poor-house rules of this State are given in the Appendix, to which reference is invited.

12. The wages paid to labourers on relief-works should be a little more than what is required for their bare sustenance. In my experience it appears to be better to give three-fourths of the wages to such labourers, and deposit the remaining one-fourth part. This saving should be paid to them when they desire to leave the works. This will enable the distressed people to resume their profession at home after they leave the relief-works.

In some places the relief-works should provide some remunerative industries, such as tile-making, sawing, carpentry or other simple things, so as to give these people an opportunity to learn some profession. It would be proper to increase the wage of a labourer having children at some rate per child.

13. I found in my experience that many people retired to poor-houses and relief-works after leaving their household implements, plough, etc. When they returned they could not find their houses, etc. I think there should be some provision in the Famine Code to the effect that the gaontia should not destroy the houses, etc., of such people and wait for them for a fixed time.

14. Considering the best hope to stave off famine is by getting a good and full crop, District Officers should try their best to get as large an area sown as is possible and adopt measures for their preservation till they are reaped.

For the first it would be necessary to provide seed-grain for those who have none. This requires careful consideration. In this State a large quantity was bought by the State and distributed and others were also induced to do so.

The most essential point for the District Officer is to notice the various requirements of tenants. Much information can be had regarding this from the register referred to in paragraph 4 above. Seed should be supplied exactly according to the needs of tenants. In 1897 I had ascertained, before the crops were sown, how much seed was required by each tenant. Hence I could fully supply them with it. Thus all the land was sown. I have no doubt that the District Officers in Central Provinces have taken full care in this matter, and the Charitable money proved exceedingly beneficial.

15. During famine periods it is a very necessary and difficult task to arrange for the preservation of crops and prevention of petty thefts of grain. Commonly, the distressed people steal the half-ripe crop at night. For the prevention of this mischief, the following measures were tried by me, with a great degree of success :—

(*a*) In each village a list was prepared of such persons as had been previously suspected to commit this kind of crime. Then a person was selected from each house from among the tenants. These two separate gangs constituted together the village police. The kotwars and the malguzars were appointed as head constables over them. These were divided into two batches of half number each. One batch did duty till midnight in the fields, and the other batch took rest in the village *gudhi*. The watches were changed at midnight. In this way the suspected persons were watched, and arrangements were made to save the crops. The grain thefts were fully prevented.

(*b*) As usual the Magistrates were instructed to pass for the most part, sentences of whipping, in petty thefts of grain. But when the crops were nearly ready, they were directed to award sentences of imprisonment for terms extending over the period necessary for the reaping of crops. This measure, though it increased the number of prisoners in the jail, nevertheless preserved the crops.

Instead of to Jail, they may have been sent to the poor-houses to be watched more closely than other inmates.

(*c*) Complaints are usually received in regard to the coolies employed on relief-works, that they use to steal at night. For them ordinary police, consisting also of some labourers, should be appointed to keep watch.

16. In Chhattisgarh there is a large population of Chamars, and they are impecunious to a degree. I should think that as a class, they were affected the most by the recent famine. They had largely taken to cattle lifting and poisoning. Some better means must be devised to prevent this. The village police did something to prevent it.

17. In the districts where there are no jungles or hills it is necessary, during the course of famine, to arrange for the support of cattle. I think there should be some instructions on this matter in the Famine Code.

18. I hold with the Famine Commission of 1879 the opinion that the number of persons on relief in the worst months of a famine ought not to exceed 15 per cent. of the population of the affected area. This standard was found in my experience to be exceeded in particular villages of the distressed tract, where about 50 per cent. had left for the relief-works. But in other villages of the same affected area, the number of persons on relief was found to be only 5 per cent. The correct standard of relief as applied to the whole of the affected area will not exceed 15 per cent. In this State the number of persons on relief in portions less distressed than others did never exceed 5 per cent. of the population of the affected area.

19. I do not think that the proportion of the total population relieved was, in any case, larger than was necessary to prevent loss of life or severe suffering.

20. It is true that in the present famine people have resorted to relief-work's at an earlier stage of distress than in previous famines. There were not so many forms of relief ready and available in the past famines, at an earlier stage of distress, as in the present one. Moreover, this time, the officers speedily recognized the scarcity in time and provided for it. The experience of the past famines was also useful to some extent.

21. In many cases the distressed people retired to poor-houses and relief-works in their neighbourhood. Probably they did not know the condition of the other district, and thought they would be better off there than in their own

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homes. It was something like panic which drove them from place to place, and they found out to their bitter cost the places they had fled to were no better off.

22. Generally rice, kodo, kutki and mahua form the food staple of the labourers and the lowest class of people. From July to August mahua is included with these grains. In the poor-houses in this State rice and vegetables were usually given. In the rainy season mahua also was given. I would have preferred kodon, but it was not procurable. In cases where rice was dear, wheat was given. The people liked rice better than wheat.

23. In my opinion the distressed inhabitants of a village may be induced to attend relief-works at a distance of three miles, whence they can return home every night. When accommodation is provided on relief-works, all the distressed inhabitants of that district would gladly attend relief-works.

24. The relief labourers can gladly go by rail, etc., to any large public work abroad. But this would be injurious to the place which they would leave for the relief-work. Because more than half such labourers would settle permanently in the country abroad.

25. I should think it desirable that the officers-in-charge of relief-camps should be vested with executive and magisterial powers, just like a Tahsildar, for maintenance of order in the camp.

26. I think that in 1896 the food-stocks in India were not sufficient. In 1895 the surplus food-stocks in some parts had been sent to the distressed tracts. The reports as to the failure of harvest during 1896 affected, to a certain extent, the prices of food-grains. But last year's high prices were due to the unusual lowness of stocks. In the late famine the Marwaris made fortunes in the grain trade because they spread themselves in villages and advanced money to tenants. They had gained nothing in 1896 and became quite hopeless. But when the wheat crop during 1896 came to be bountiful they made good fortunes and derived much profit.

The Kachhis come next in point of gain. They sent for rice from Burma or some other place where it could be had cheaper, and sold it in the distressed tracts.

The tenants and malguzars who had surplus private stocks of food-grain made money, but their number was too small. In this State I caused such wealthy people to lend food-grain to other poor tenants at the market rate, and on the condition of paying 20 annas per rupee after crops are reaped.

In almost all parts of the Central Provinces the wheat crop during 1897 was first class. The tenants and malguzars of such tracts made fortunes. In this State the gaontias and tenants of the Khamaria, Khairagarh and Singarpur parganas enjoyed full advantage of the rice rabi harvest during 1897 and the high prices of food-grain, and they made good fortunes. This enabled them to pay the arrears of land revenue for 1896 and the demand for 1897, and make advance payment for 1898. But the raiyats of the jungly parganas gained nothing in this way.

How does the late famine compare with the past ones?

27. The recent famine surpassed all other previous ones both in its extent and the length of time. This famine affected nearly the whole of India. There were hardly any tracts in which it was not felt. At least the prices there had risen very high. In former famines only disjointed local areas suffered. Even in severity they did not equal the present one. Railways made it possible that we were starved to death as well as our neighbours; and made it very unlikely that we both be saved. While in former famine only one of us would have gone. The effects of the present famine will be long felt, and succession of good crops for years to come will restore the country to its former status.

In the past famines, in various parts of India, food-stocks had been left, but I think there now exists no such stock after the recent famine.

28. Now after the famine the following measures seem called for to restore the people of the distressed tracts to their normal condition :—

(1) In every distressed area a large relief-work is required till the end of this year, and necessarily till the next rains, so as to provide work for those tenants and artizans who have been ruined in the late famine, and do not now have the necessary means for making a start in life again. It would be much better to deposit one-fourth part of their wages as already suggested. Early in June they will get this saving, which will enable them to take to agriculture or other professions.

(2) At the head-quarters of each district there should now continue to be a poor-house, to accommodate disabled paupers without relatives or any fellow-villager willing to help them. Otherwise, these persons will roam about begging and be ruined. The cripples will perish.

(3) It is high time to help those tenants who have lost their all, and have returned again to their villages, and have no agricultural means or seed-grain or bullocks or any kind of resources to start afresh. Takavi should be given to such people. This is the best way in which the charitable money could be utilized.

(4) The one-fourth part of rent due from the tenants who were ruined should be remitted. And one-fourth part should be postponed to be paid during the next year.

(5) The land revenue of those villages in which the tenants had quitted their lands, and the nikasi had, as a consequence, decreased, should be reduced, and for these villages a new summary settlement should be made for the next five years based on the present nikasi.

I propose the following arrangements to reduce the jama of those villages where the nikasi has decreased, owing to a large area remaining uncultivated, till the future Settlement :—

(1) It is not necessary to reduce the jama in the villages where the nikasi has not fallen by more than 25 per cent., except in very special cases.

(2) The jama of those villages where the nikasi has decreased by more than 25 per cent., should be reduced by 15 or 20 per cent., as the case may be.

(3) The jama should be reduced by 25 per cent. in villages where the nikasi has fallen by more than 50 per cent. till the future Settlement. In no case shall the jama exceed the present nikasi.

The Raja Sahib approved of this proposal, and it is hoped that all such villages will be restored as before; and in the next Settlement the original jama or something more than that could be assessed. Had this not been done so, these villages would have been depopulated and much reduction had to be made.

In jungly villages too the reduction of forest duty formerly made should be allowed to continue during the current year.

29. I think that the following measures are necessary as a safeguard against future famines :—

(1) An estimate should be formed of the average outturn in each district, which should be compared with the number of inhabitants therein. The people should be considered to be in a satisfactory condition if the scale of food-grains per head would not be less than 1½ seers per diem, or 15 maunds per year. If the export and import be on a par, this estimate will be sufficient. But if the outturn is less than that, in those tracts where communication is not easy, schemes for opening up the country by new roads, etc., should be ready for starting at once.

In such districts it is also necessary to make an attempt to increase the cultivated land and open irrigation works.

(2) Efforts should be made to increase the quantity of food-stocks. The cultivators should be permitted to sell only so much grain as can be saved from their yearly requirements. They should be forced to preserve their food-grain necessary for their ordinary requirements for a year, consisting also of the agricultural seed-grain. As soon as the signs of scarcity fully appear, the District Officer should anyhow supply the food-stocks necessary for each district, either through dealers in grain trade or Government sources, or rich persons of the district.

(3) For each district a scheme should be framed for the organization of private and Government relief works, so that they may be at once opened when necessary.

(4) Irrigation works should form an important portion of this scheme.

(5) The causes which prevent good rainfall according to the Meteorological Statements and Reports should be removed, as far as possible. On the other hand, causes which help to bring good rains should be attended to.

30. Now I submit before the Commission a statement in regard to Khairagarh State, where I managed the late famine affairs, and every kind of information was available. It will show the area and population of the State; the average rainfall during 1897 and its preceding year; the average outturn of each kind of grain per acre; the condition of crops in the past years; measures taken for relief and the degree of success which attended those measures; the number of persons relieved in each case; the private and the State relief works; the system of extracting labour from labourers and payment of wages; the poor-house rules; the requirements of tenants; supply of seed-grains; the extent of grain thefts and measures taken to prevent them; takavi advances; remission of forest duty, and steps taken after famine to restore people to their normal condition. I hope that the Commission will find a reply to most of the printed questions. The portions in italics deserve special attention.

31. Hereto is appended a map* showing the parganas in this State. The map is coloured deep-blue and light-blue. The deep-blue represents the intensity of distress in the affected parts, while the light-blue stands for the less distressed areas. This shows that the western jungly parganas of Khowla, Lachhna, Dongargarh, and Pathri have been severely affected by famine, while Khamaria, Khairagarh, and Singarpur parganas were distressed in a less degree. The former was so much affected by scarcity that it cannot be restored to its normal condition without further help. The latter could well endure the late distress, and if there be an ordinary crop this year, these people will recover their former position.

32. The following table shows the cultivated land, land revenue, area, population and the villages in each pargana of the State:—

Name of pargana.	Number of villages.	Area in square miles.	Population.	Land revenue.	Occupied area in square miles.	Average population per square mile.
				R a.		
Khamaria	94	126·75	34,597	52,268 0	103·17	272
Khairagarh	158	239·88	58,037	54,167 0	201·23	242
Singarpur	119	181·69	43,971	50,080 0	149·23	241
Kholwa	20	26·25	4,061	4,300 0	12·78	156
Lachhna	21	51·14	4,230	944 8	11·33	83
Dongargarh	45	119·41	26,798	5,507 0	25·89	225
Pathri	64	185·88	9,490	17,605 0	16·52	51
TOTAL	521	931·00	181,184	1,84,871 8	520·15	194

The average population is 194 souls per square mile. The cultivated area, in the first three fertile parganas, is 86 per cent. in acres, and in the last four jungly parganas 56 per cent.

The following table shows the average outturn per acre, areas in acres, and the estimated total outturn as against the normal outturn of different food-grains in the State:—

Name of food-grains.	Area in acres.	Average outturn per acre.	Estimated total outturn.	
		Khandi.	Khandi.	Kathas.
Rice	91,277·38	4	365,108	
Kodo	102,305·75	1	102,305	15
Wheat	66,839·50	2½	167,098	15
Gram	4,075·56	2¼	9,169	17½
Birra	54·37	2¼	122	
TOTAL	264,552·56	...	643,804	47½

It is clear that if there be an ordinary crop, the total amount of food-grains will be 1,609,510 maunds. By dividing this by the total population, the rate per man comes to 8 maunds 35 seers per year, and 1 seer per diem.

33. At the three rain-gauges in the State, the following rain-fall was registered, month by month, for the past two years:—

Rainfall.

Months.	Khairagarh.		Dongargarh.		Khamaria.	
	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.	1896.	1897.
January	...	·80	...	...	...	·68
February	...	·20	...	1·10	...	·10
March	...	·78	...	·05	...	·69
April	...	...	...	1·43	...	1·33
May	...	·52	·12	...	·15	...
June	13·24	3·01	14·03	3·52	9·95	3·10
July	15·15	12·84	17·37	14·03	15·39	11·51
August	16·74	14·24	16·18	13 80	18·84	14 06
September	...	5·73	·13	7·59	1·06	5·50
October	...	1·13	...	3·05	...	3·17
November	3·03	...	2·40	...	1·83	...
Deeember	...	...	...	...	...	...
TOTAL	48·16	39·25	50·23	44·57	46·82	40·14

Average rainfall for 1897. 41·32 inches.

It appears that there had been no rainfall from January to May in the preceding year, 1896, while there continued to be some showers in every month of the corresponding period of the year under review, 1897. In the previous year the fall from June to August was unusually heavy, while it was quite normal during the year under report. The average rainfall during these months is now 30·04 as against 45·63 of the preceding year or exactly two-thirds. During September and October of the previous year there had been no rainfall at Khairagarh, while only 13 cents. had rained at Dongargarh, and about 1 inch at Khamaria.

The fall during the corresponding months of the year 1897 was 8·86 at Khairagarh, 10·64 at Dongargarh, and 8·67 inches at Khamaria. In November and December there was no rainfall as against 2·42 inches of the year preceding, 1896.

The average rainfall for the whole State is 41·32 inches, as compared to 48·33 inches of the year previous.

There being no rainfall from January to May of the year 1896, the ground was dry and stood in need of moisture. In June last, the rainfall was comparatively very meagre; but as there had been occasionally some showers since the commencement of 1897 it was sufficient.

The unusually heavy fall in the months of June and July, and the absolute drought in September and October 1896 are the principal causes of famine. On the other hand the occasional showers till November explain the bountiful kharif harvest and the good prospects of the rabi during 1897.

The rainfall in this State was registered only since 1889. From that time till now is given below:—

Year.	Rainfall in inches.
1889	35·23
1890	40·99
1891	55·91
1892	45·00
1893	50·00
1894	54·5
1895	41·00
1896	48·36
1897	41·32

The average rainfall for the past eight-years is 46·37 and it is 45·81 including 1897. It was never so low in any of the preceding years except 1889. But fortunately there was a very timely full of rain, as said by

* Not reproduced.

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tenants, "God showered rain whenever they asked for it."

This has resulted in the kharif crops being above the average, and there is a good prospect of the rabi, which will be described hereafter.

The only fear is there may not be a scarcity of water during the course of the hot season. The tanks are not quite full as usual, and the surrounding fields will be soon dried up. Our only hope was that there might be some winter showers during January last. Had this been so the prospects of the rabi crop would have been exceedingly good. There was no fall in January, but more than 2 inches rained during the second week of February 1898. Nevertheless this fall was very beneficial to the rabi, which it is hoped would yield about a 12 anna crop.

34. If we take a 16 anna to be the full outturn there exists the following ratio between the area under rabi and kharif crops in each pargana :—

Crops.

Name of Pargana.	Ratio between.	
	Rabi.	Kharif.
Khamaria	9	7
Khairagarh	7	9
Singarpur	7	9
Pathri	6	10
Dongargarh	4	12
Lachhna	2	14
Kholwa	4	12

Khamaria, Khairagarh and Singarpur parganas have 1st class soil. The soil of Khamaria pargana is generally kanhar, Khairagarh, and Singarpur parganas have kanhar and first rate dorsa. In all these parganas wheat and kodon and arhar are alternately sown in the wheat-growing fields. On this calculation it should be remembered that the areas under kharif crops are somewhat larger.

To form a proper estimate of the crops of this State, the first and foremost point is to ascertain what should be the normal outturn or a 16 anna crop. By a full or 16 anna crop, it is not to be understood that it represents the maximum outturn, but 16 anna stands for the average outturn per acre, if there is good ordinary crop, or it means the normal outturn of the State per acre.

From reliable sources it was gathered that a 16 anna or normal outturn of the different food-grains is as under :—

Name of Grain.	Normal outturn per acre.
	Khandis.
Dhan	8
Kodo	1
Wheat	2½
Gram	2¼
Linseed	1
Batana	2
Masur	2

Crops have failed since 1895. The average outturn of rabi for 1895 was 10 annas and of kharif 6 annas. For jungly parganas, this continual failure was extremely trying. The prospects of the next rabi crop towards the close of 1895 were so gloomy as to fully justify my apprehension in regard to scarcity. The extract of my report for 1895 is as follows :—

"The rabi grains during the year yielded a 12 anna crop, except linseed, which yielded an 8 anna crop. Had there been no rainfall in the adjoining parganas of Khairagarh, Singarpur, and Khamaria at the end of October, the famine was inevitable. The result of this rain was that there was a 10 anna kharif crop in Khairagarh, Singarpur, and Khamaria, a 6 anna crop in Dongargarh and Pathri, and a 4 anna crop in Lachhna and Kholwa. In the future rabi crops, the wheat would at most yield an 8 anna crop. The conditions of linseed, gram and arhar (pulse) are good up to this time, and it is hoped that these grains would at most yield a 16 anna crop as usual.

"There was a 4 anna crop of kharif in Kholwa, Lachhna, and the jungly parts of Dongargarh, where the rabi crops also do not grow much. Consequently famine is anticipated and a relief-work should be started at Dokrabhata. For this purpose ₹5,000 have been allotted for in the budget for 1896."

The following table gives the outturn of each pargana of both the rabi and kharif during 1896 as against the normal outturn :—

Kind of grain.		Rabi.					Kharif.	
		Wheat.	Gram.	Linseed.	Batana.	Masur.	Rice.	Kodo.
Full outturn	Normal outturn 16-anna crop.	2½ Kh.	2¼ Kh.	1 Kh.	2 Kh.	2 Kh.	4 Kh.	1 Kh.
		Kh. K. As.	Kh. K. As.	Kh. As.	Kh. K. As.	Kh. K. As.	Kh. As.	Kh. As.
Outturn during 1896.	Khamaria . . .	1 18 or 12	1 14 or 12	12½ or 10	2 0 or 16	1 5 or 10	15 or 3	10 or 8
	Khairagarh . . .	1 11 or 10	Do.	Do.	1 10 or 12	Do.	Do.	Do.
	Singarpur . . .	Do.	1 8 or 10	Do.	Do.	Do.	Do.	Do.
	Patri . . .	1 5 or 8	Do.	10 or 8	Do.	1 0 or 8	10 or 2	5 or 4
	Dongargarh . . .	19 0 or 6	1 2 or 8	Do.	1 0 or 8	Do.	Do.	Do.
	Kholwa . . .	Do.	Do.	7½ or 6	Do.	Do.	5 or 1	Do.
	Lachhna . . .	Do.	0 18 or 6	Do.	Do.	0 15 or 6	Do.	2½ or 2

In 1896 the average outturn of rabi crop in this State was 9 annas and 6 annas only in the jungly parganas. The average outturn of dhan (kharif) was 2 annas and of kodon 5 annas. In jungly parganas dhan yielded only 1 anna, and kodon a 2 anna crop. This could not but be followed by the widespread famine.

Leaving the jungly portion of the State, the scarcity was not at all felt in the other parts, even after the failure of the rabi crops. The failure of the second crop did tell a bit on them. However, they had enough capital to fall back upon. Very few of them needed State help.

The cultivated area was 367,380·23 acres during 1897, as against 356,530 of the year 1896, while 13,690·77 acres of land lay unsown as against 24,541 of the year 1896. This increase of 10,825·23 acres is due to a large quantity of seed being distributed among the tenants.

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The following Jinswar table will show the sowings of different grains in acres in each pargana, and ratio between the cultivated soil during the years 1896-97 :—

Name of Pargana.	Wheat.	Rice.	Sugar-cane.	Alsi.	Kodon, arhar and kutki.	Grain.	Sanai.	Miscellaneous.	Total.	Do-fasli.	After deducting do-fasli.	Percentage.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Khamaria 1896 .	18,882·20	14,811·41	94·64	4,839·96	24,703·67	709·50	21·44	13,756·36	77,823·20	11,061·42	66,760·78	20
Ditto 1897 .	1,380·22	14,311·37	94·64	4,408·06	26,157·62	709·50	21·44	11,307·41	75,390·26	11,061·61	64,328·84	20·2
Kholwa 1896 .	18,021·83	827·93	...	526·79	3,084·42	54·02	..	2,524·33	8,049·32	21·18	8,028·14	2·09
Ditto 1897 .	721·83	627·93	...	311·29	5,272·32	50·02	...	59·77	7,043·16	...	7,043·16	1·8
Khairagarh 1896 .	24,575·49	22,285·06	12·29	13,955·58	1,945·08	2,311·63	13·63	46,139·76	128,762·53	4,837·62	123,924·91	33·10
Ditto 1897 .	33,475·97	21,171·24	108·24	14,866·81	40,160·45	2,533·85	170·25	12,221·9	124,728·71	4,837·62	119,891·09	33·4
Singarpur 1896 .	18,521·09	28,217·53	20·53	13,989·53	29,231·69	642·09	·87	15,444·57	106,067·93	11,689·18	94,378·75	27 05
Ditto 1897 .	17,721·09	27,817·53	75·25	8,997·96	36,561·39	1,642·09	...	9·938	102,753·31	11,689·18	91,062·13	27·5
Lachhna 1896 .	207·39	705·43	...	433·78	4,048·89	44·62	...	425·36	5,865·47	99·28	5,766,19	1·5
Ditto 1897 .	107·39	405·43	...	150·68	4,023·04	44·62	...	401·13	5,132·29	...	5,132·29	1·20
Dongargarh 1896 .	557·55	5,142·70	1·43	1,138·64	7,892·95	52·33	...	1,318·76	16,104·36	812·70	15,291·66	4 26
Ditto 1897 .	407·55	4,142·70	...	1,238·64	4,994·50	52·33	95·25	3,160·35	14.091·32	812 70	13,278·62	3·38
Pathri 1896 .	3,075·93	319,277·32	1·24	5,336·48	13,380·5	261·37	18·43	4,459·84	46,310·66	3,931·27	12,379·37	11·99
Ditto 1897 .	2,869·36	18,277·32	...	5,036·09	14,804	261·27	25·80	2,152·32	43 426·25	3,921·27	49,494·98	11·6
Total . {1896 .	66,839·50	91,277·38	130·13	40,230·77	102,305·75	4,075·56	54·37	84,068·98	388,992·47	32,552·65	356,529·82	...
{1897 .	73,683·11	86,753·52	278·13	35,009·52	131,993·32	5,293·78	312·74	3,920·88	372,565·3	32 552·19	340,233·11	...
Percentage . {1896 .	17·18	23·49	·02	10·40	26·30	1·00	·01	21·60	...	9·10	...	...
{1897 .	19·7	23·2	·07	9·3	35·4	1·4	80·	105·	...	8·7	...	...

It appears from the above table that of the total cultivated area 35·4 per cent., as against 26·3 per cent., is kodon, 23·2 per cent., as against 23·49 per cent., dhan, 19·7 per cent., as against 17·8 per cent., wheat, and 21·7 per cent., as against 33·3 per cent., masur, pulse, etc. Wheat in Lachhna is only ·14 per cent., in Dongargarh ·55, in Kholwa ·97 and in Pathri 3·8 per cent. It shows that in these jungly parganas the rabi harvest was only nominal and the people depended chiefly on forest produce and kharif crop.

During the 1st quarter of 1897 partial showers of rain continued to fall, which was beneficial to the rabi crop, especially wheat.

Khamaria, Khairagarh and Singarpur outturns are above the average. Rest show less. The price of wheat rose more than double, whereby both the gaontias and tenants made much money. After laying in a stock of wheat for their food, they had a saving sufficient to meet the State revenue demand and other requirements. In the above four parganas the outturn of the other rabi grains was not below the average.

Tha seed-stocks were depleted largely and the State had to meet the demand at a considerable cost. However, the result has been satisfactory. Not a single field, it is believed, has been left unsown.

Kharif crop.

The subjoined table shows the outturn of kharif in each pargana as against the normal outturn :—

	Kind of grain.	Dhan.	Kodo.
	Normal outturn per acre.	8 Kh.	2 Kh.
		Kh. As.	Kh. K. As.
Outturn during 1827.	Khamaria	8 or 16	3 or 24
	Khairagarh	9 or 18	2½ or 20
	Singapur	Ditto	Ditto.
	Pathri	8 or 16	2 2½ or 17
	Dongargarh	Litto	2 or 16
	Kholwa	7 or 14	2 2½ or 17
	Lachhna	6 or 12	2 or 16

One hundred and fifty-nine and 60 crop experiments were made during the years 1896 and 1897 respectively by the Naib-Diwan, Superintendent of Land Records, the experienced Tahsildars and myself.

It has been described above as to what is the normal outturn of each kind of grain in this State. I give here a table showing the normal outturn and the result of crop experiments made in this State. It will show what is the outturn of each pargana as against the normal outturn :—

	Kind of Grain.	Wheat.	Gram.	Linseed.	Batana.	Masur.
	Normal outturn or 16 anna crop.	2½ Kh.	2½ Kh.	2 Kh.	2 Kh.	2 Kh.
		Kh. K. As.	Kh. K. As.	Kh. K. As.	Kh. As.	Kh. As.
Outturn of each pargana during 1897.	Khamaria	3 5½ or 21	2 8 or 17	1 0 or 16	1½ or 12	1½ or 12
	Khairagarh	3 2½ or 20	2½ 0 or 16	0 17½ or 14	2 or 16	1½ or 14
	Singarpur	2 0 or 16½	Do.	Do	1½ or 12	1½ or 12
	Pathri	2 3½ or 14	1 13½ or 12	0 15 or 12	1½ or 10	1 0r 8
	Dongargarh	1½ or 8	1 2½ or 8	0 7½ or 6	1 or 8	Do.
	Kholwa	Do.	Do.	Do,	Do.	Do.
	Lachhna	Do.	0 11½ or 4	Do.	Do.	Do.

The outturn of dhan in Khairagarh and Singarpur is 9 khandis per acre or 18 annas. In Khamaria, Dongargarh and Pathri parganas it is 16 annas and in Kholwa and Lachhna 12 annas. If we include the jungly parganas, the average outturn of dhan comes to be about 16 annas. But in these parganas (Lachhna and Kholwa) the cultivated kharif area is only 10,602·52 acres. If the whole cultivated land be taken into account, the average outturn of dhan per acre will not be below 17 annas. In all parganas kodon is rather above the average. The average outturn of the whole State is 18·3 annas.

This good crop both of paddy and kodon has taken off the famine, and the prices of these have fallen approximately to their normal condition as some years past.

During October there was sufficient rain for rabi to germinate, and though there have been no winter showers hitherto, the prospects of this crop, continue to be favourable.

Prospects of the rabi crop.

The area under rabi crop will not fall much short of what it has been in normal years. I have been touring in the State, and am of opinion that except in Lachhna, Kholwa, and Dongargarh, and in jungly parts of Pathri, the rabi area is not less than that of other years. But in the abovementioned parganas, a certain area has remained unsown, simply because there were no cultivators. They left for relief-works and poor-houses. As these parts have a small rabi area, the State totals will not be affected much.

35. Formerly Dongargarh was the biggest market town in the State, and the prices of food-grains ruling there affected those of the whole State. But for the past three years a weekly statement of prices of different food-grains has been kept also at Khamaria and Khairagarh, and the average rate of

Prices of food-grains.

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grains in these markets is considered to be the rate ruling in the State. Before 1887 when the railway lines had not been extended to other parts of Chhattisgarh, the rates of food-grains in this State were so high that the people of other places were surprised to hear it. It is therefore not proper to include the rates then prevailing for estimating the average rate of the State. Therefore I omit to give the rates of grains prevailing before 1887, and those during 1896 and 1897, the years of scarcity, and take up the rates during the nine years from 1887 to 1895, in calculating the average rate of food-grains ruling in the State.

The following table shows the average rate per rupee of the principal food-grains, *i.e.*, rice, wheat and kodon during the periods from 1887 to 1895 :—

Grains.	1887.	1888.	1889.	1890.	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.
	Seers.	Seers.	Seers.	Seers.	Seers.	Seers.	Seers.	Seers.	Seers.
Rice	25	25	19	20	13	13	18	12	15
Wheat	33	24	22	18	12½	12½	21	13½	15½
Kodon	48	40	35	25	44	44	25	36	32½

The year 1887 is the cheapest, and subsequent years have steadily grown dearer and dearer. The average rate of wheat for the past nine years from 1887 to 1895, which include two years of continuous agricultural depression, was 21·75 seers, of rice 18 seers and kodon 40 seers to the rupee.

In 1896 the rate of food-grains was only two-thirds of the average rate, that is, rice sold at 12 seers, wheat at 15 seers and kodon at 25 seers to the rupee, which finds no equal in any of the past years. Unfortunately the rate of wheat during 1897 fell to two-thirds of that during 1896, *i.e.*, 10 seers as against 15 seers. The rate of rice fell to 9 seers or only three-fourths, and that of kodon 15 seers or only three-fifths.

The rate of wheat, rice and kodon till June 1896 were so moderate that they cannot be called rates of a year of scarcity. Since July 1897 these rates began to fall every month.

The following statement shows how the rates of food-grains fluctuated since July 1896 till now :—

Name of grain.	Name of Tahsil.	Monthly rate in seers. 1896. July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	1897. January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	1898. January.
Wheat	Dongargarh	15	13¾	10¾	10	11½	10	10	11	10½	9½	9½	8½	8	8	8¾	8¾	10	11½	12
	Khairagarh	17½	14½	13	12	12	10½	10	10½	11	10½	10½	8¾	8	7½	8	8½	10	11½	10½
	Khamaria	18¾	16¾	15½	14	11½	11½	10	12	12	11	10½	9	8	8	7½	8	11	12	13¾
Gram	Dongargarh	14	12½	12½	11½	10	10	8¾	10	10½	10½	8	8	8½	8½	9	10	9	9	10
	Khairagarh	17	15	15	13	11	11	...	13	12½	11½	9	9	8	7½	8	9	10	10	11
	Khamaria	20	19½	16½	14	14	14	13½	12½	12½	13	10	8½	8½	7	7	7	7	10½	11
Rice	Dongargarh	12½	11	12½	11½	10	10	8½	9½	8	8	7	7	7½	7½	9½	...	11	5	12¾
	Khairagarh	12½	12½	12½	9	9	9	9	9½	9	8¾	7	7½	7½	7	8	9	13	15	14
	Khamaria	15	15	13½	11½	11	10½	10	10	10	10	9	7	7½	7	7	9	14	16	15
Kodo-kutki.	Dongargarh	15	15	16½	12½	12½	12½	12	12	11	12½	15	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	17½
	Khairagarh	30	25	20	20	15	15½	12½	...	...	...	...	20	10	9	10	12	20	21	24
	Khamaria	26	25	21½	35½	11½	10	17	20	20	20	16	12	9	10	10	10	25	26	30
Linseed	Dongargarh	9½	11½	10	10	10	10	9½	10	12	9½	10½	10	10	10	9	10	10	11	13½
	Khairagarh	12	12	12	12	12	12	...	10½	12½	12½	2	12	12	12	11½	8½	10	11	15
	Khamaria	11	11	11	11	13½	15	12½	12	12	11½	11	11	10	9	7	7½	10½	12	12
Till	Dongargarh	9	10	10½	10	10	10½	9	11	10½	8	9	8½	8½	9½	8½	8	14	14	12½
	Khairagarh	10	10	10	10	12½	12	...	10	10	10	10	9½	7½	8	6	6	9	14	13¾
	Khamaria	9	9	8¾	9	11	12	12	12	12	12	11½	10	6	6	6	6	11	15	11½
Arhar	Dongargarh	15	18¾	16½	13¾	10	10	13	13	10½	10½	10½	10½	9½	9½	10½	10½	10	11	13½
	Khairagarh	20	20	18	18	14	12	...	12	12½	14½	13	11½	10	9	7½	10	13	13	15¼
	Khamaria	25	22½	19½	19	19	18¾	15	14	12	14	10½	10	9½	10½	13	10	14	14	15
Urad	Dongargarh	15	15	13½	11½	10	12	9	12½	11	10	10	10	7½	7½	8½	8¾	10	10	10
	Khairagarh	16	16	15	12½	13½	10	...	10½	10½	9¾	8½	...	7	6¾	7	6½	9	8½	12½
	Khamaria	15	14½	11¼	9	14	13	10	10	10	10	10¼	10	7½	7½	...	11	9	9	12

From the above table it is clear that the average rate of food-grains steadily decreased from July 1896 till January 1897, when it was only 10 seers to the rupee. From February till May the prices remained constant. The prospects of the rabi crop seemed favourable since February. When arhar was reaped its rate became 14 seers to the rupee. Consequently the average rate during these months rose to 11 seers to the rupee. In May large quantities were bought by the outsiders and the rates touched famine prices. That was really the hardest time.

In October 1896 wheat sold at 10 seers and rice at 11 seers at the Dongargarh market. This caused a panic among the populace and they made very earnest requests to interfere lest there be grain riots as in Nagpur. *I went down to Dongargarh and explained matters to all the merchants. State interference in the matter of fixing any rate was refused, and the common people were plainly told that any attempt to cause a riot will be severely dealt with and every measure was adopted to suppress effectually any such outburst. The sister State of Nandgaon had taken measures to fix a cheaper rate than what was possible, and as natural they could not be maintained longer. When the stocks were nearly depleted in Nandgaon, our market was able to offer a better return for the money and for a longer period than what Nandgaon had done for a few days. This shows that an attempt to fix the prices causes famine, but does not diminish it.*

The average rate of all grains remained at about 8 seers per rupee.

September was the dearest month, when it declined to 7 seers to the rupee. From November when new rice came in there has been considerable improvement.

From June 1896 to June 1897 Khamaria continued to be the cheapest market in the State, and Dongargarh the dearest. Khairagarh itself was the mean between the two. But from August 1897 this state of affairs has completely changed, Dongargarh being the cheapest and Khamaria the dearest. This clearly shows that first of all from July 1896 to June 1897 there was good export trade—the grain going from Khamaria to outside places, but from August imports seem to have considerably increased and trade ran the other way. Of all grains kodon was the cheapest, arhar, wheat, gram and rice following in order. But from July to October 1896 the price of kodon also was approximately the same as that of other grains.

In November, when kharif crops were nearly ready, the rate of kodon rose to 25 seers per rupee.

I think it is no use to keep cheap rates for special paupers, but it will be harmful. It is very difficult to decide as to who should get food-grains at the ordinary rates and what persons at a cheaper rate. This practice will cause a tumult and riot.

The imports and exports in this State are registered only at Dongargarh. In 1896 the import of grains into this State was very small. In 1897 Burma rice worth about ₹1,50,000 and wheat worth ₹60,000 were imported into this State. Seed-grains worth ₹50,000 were purchased and brought in.

Exports and import of grains.

In 1896 edible grains worth ₹2,83,708 were exported to other places. In 1897 food-grains worth ₹5,24,790 were exported.

The rabi harvest during 1897 being good, the Marwaris and Kachhis made purchases of these grains and sent them abroad.

26. There has been considerable difference between the condition of the hilly and jungly parganas and the plains of this State.

Condition of people.

The former were the first to feel the pinch of poverty and scarcity long before the people of the plains felt it. It was not till December 1896 that a general scarcity appeared, but after that the condition of the people on the whole was most distressing. The jungly people had to run down a long way off from their homes to get some work in the relief camps, while their more fortunate brethren of the plains had the satisfaction of being not far off from their houses. During the harvest some of these agricultural labourers returned to cut the crops, but again they had to return during the rains after the bytasi was over. This was the most trying season for them. There have not been many desertions of their homes among the inhabitants of the plains, but on the contrary many jungly villages with their population have almost become mere ruins. The non-jungly parganas had also enjoyed a good rabi crop, which though it did not supply food for them, nevertheless enriched, and thus indirectly made them meet the famine more easily.

The calamity in the jungly parganas has naturally led to a revision of settlement of some of these, in which more than ¾ths land has remained unsown for the last two years. This would considerably reduce the land revenue of these villages, thus enable the malguzars to spend some money in getting them settled again. Some provisions will also be made for takavi to such malguzars.

The number of births and deaths for the past seven years is subjoined :—

Years.	Births.	Deaths.
1891	5,485	3,486
1892	4,916	5,184
1893	3,913	2,430
1894	5,165	3,087
1895	4,564	2,640
1896	4,507	5,670
1897	2,282	9,630

The decrease in the number of births and the increase in that of deaths are so great during the year 1897 that they find no parallel in any of the past years.

The death-number had comparatively increased in the year 1896 and it is even greater during 1897.

This increase is due to (1) cholera and (2) famine. By the latter, I don't mean that people died of starvation, and there would be very few cases in which it could be said that they died from hunger. But poor people had to take unusual diet in consequence of which they remained thin and emaciated. They fell an easy prey to various kinds of diseases, such as bowel complaints, dysentery, fever, etc., which prevailed on a much larger scale.

The decrease in birth-number is due to the fact that in such an unhealthy year people remained generally unsettled, anxious and grieved.

The average number of deaths for the past five years, excluding 1897, is 3,500 souls. This is 1·9 per cent. of the total population. The death-number in 1897 was 9,630 or 5 per cent.

37. Some enumeration of the measures taken to relieve this widespread calamity will not be out of place. They are as follows :—

Measures taken for the relief of distressed people.

The jungly parganas of this State were the worst off, and they required the greatest help. A reduction of forest duties was the most appropriate form of relief for them.

Reduction of Forest duty.

The municipality of Dongargarh where forest produce like grass, firewood, etc., finds a ready sale, did also reduce, and in most totally remit, the town duty leviable on these articles. The deficiency in income from this source will be written-off as irrecoverable. I think it will be better if the grazing dues are remitted for a year.

It will be much useful if the Municipalities in India would remit the duty on cheap articles in time of famine.

38. The arrangements for relief-works were made from April 1896 and works were gradually opened as it seemed necessary. The following relief-works, as detailed in the annual report for 1896, deserve some special mention :—

Relief-works.

(*a*) The kharif crops in the jungly and hilly parganas had suffered much in 1895 and the rabi crop was exceptionally meagre there in 1896. By the end of 1895 the danger of a scarcity had been apprehended, and I had decided to start a tank work near Dhara village, beside the Dongargarh-Pandaria Road. A sum of ₹5,000 was sanctioned for this purpose. This precaution proved very useful, because in April 1896 the people of these parganas were hard-pressed by famine, and for them the work was at once started and regularly carried on till December 1897, when it was finally completed. This work was inspected by the Political Agent and Mr. Harriott, who had prepared plans for its extension. It provided work for about 1,000 people regularly for a year. In October 1896 Muhammad Hasim Khan, Forest Superintendent, was placed in charge of it as Additional Tahsildar, when the number of coolies increased enormously.

(2) *Lal Sagar Tank, Khamaria.*—This was constructed towards the east of Khamaria and the travellers and cattle profited much by it. It is finished. In September 1896, when full signs of scarcity became visible, other works such as Dongargarh-Pathri Road, (2) Dongargarh-Kawardha Road, (3) Viroda-Khamaria Road (4) Khairagarh-Nandgaon Road and (5) Khamaria-Simga Road were one after another opened.

Roads.

Khamaria-Simga Road.—This was altogether a new road planned. The Deputy Commissioner had kindly consented to complete this in his district, that it may open up a direct route to Simga and Tilda from Khamaria. The portion of the road which lay in British territory passed through a very distressed portion of Raipur District, and it would have been very useful thereto; the State portion of it has been completed, and we hope the other portion of it will be finished by the British Government at no distant date.

The length of all new roads constructed within this State is 17 miles. The portion through which moorum has been spread is 22 miles long. If the roads over which no moorum has been spread be not annually put to repairs or moorum be not spread over them, then they would cease to exist in a few days.

Diversion of the course of Piparia River opened in October 1896. Plan was prepared by Mr. Harriott. The top current has been dammed up and the main current removed 10 chains further off. The reclaimed land has been included in the jail garden.

The chandmari works at Khairagarh were completed and six wells made.

The following statement will show how many people remained each month on the various relief works :—

Name of month. 1896	Ranital. No.	Khamaria relief-works. No.	Khairagarh relief-works. No.	Bara-Banjara Road. No.	Total. No.
April	112	...	...	...	112
May	81	...	...	...	81
June	169	...	...	...	169
July	222	...	...	...	222
August	215	...	...	...	215
September	81	161	...	...	242
October	168	180	216	...	564
November	328	145	223	...	696
December	415	137	235	226	1,013

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Name of month.	Ranital.	Khamaria relief-works.	Khairagarh relief-works.	Bara-Banjara Road.	Total.
1897	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
January	631	259	212	94	1,196
February	457	211	178	42	888
March	438	209	176	47	870
April	400	215	123	250	988
May	497	620	200	239	1,568
June	489	840	200	240	1,569
July	300	80	...	...	380
August	286	85	...	47	418
September	...	100	...	...	100
October	...	135	...	...	135
November	...	25	...	...	25
December	...	12	...	...	12

The work of Ranital was commenced in 1896 and 112 persons were working on it at the end of that month. As soon as the work was begun a good many people gathered there. Then again only 81 persons remained at the end of May 1896. This decrease was attributed to cholera, which prevailed in May at Dhara. There were 169 persons over this work at the end of June, 222 at the end of July, and 215 at the end of August 1896. In September of that year the above road works were also opened. Thus there remained only 88 persons at the end of September.

On roads there were 161 persons in the end of September, the total being 249. In October of the preceding year the Khairagarh relief-works were started, and during this month the number of distressed people began to rise every day to the extent of about 564.

In November 1896 the number was raised to 696. In December relief-works were also started at Khamaria, and the number of coolies at the end of that month came to be 1,013, of which 415 were employed on Ranital.

Towards the end of January 1897 the number of these labourers was enhanced to 1,196, of which more than half were only employed on Ranital. In February the number began to dwindle. Hence, on 20th February 1897 there remained only 457 coolies at Raniganj, only 42 on roads, 178 at Khairagarh and 221 at Khamaria : or there remained only 888 persons as against 1,196 in January 1897. The number of labourers was greatest in the months of May and June. After this when the rains set in and other agricultural operations were begun, the numbers fell down. In the end of July there remained only 380 persons as against 1,569 of May. In August there remained only 418 labourers. The remaining coolies were such as were too thin and weak for agriculture. In the relief-works they got wages and were required to do only a slight work. The relief-works were, therefore, closed and the coolies were drafted into the poor-house.

The proportion of labourers employed on relief-works was as follows in order of their castes—Gond, Kanwar, Chamar, Ghara.

System of payment of wages.

First of all payment by gang was tried, and each gang being paid for the work done from 4 annas to 8 annas per cubic foot. But this was given up afterwards, as it led to quarrels among the coolies. Next the cowri system was adopted, but naturally it was not sufficiently well-paying to the weaker of the lot. For these latter payment per head was devised. Wages ranged from 2 annas to 1 anna.

Poor-houses.

39. In September 1896 poor-houses had to be opened, when the condition of the people grew worse and there were a lot of them wandering about with no apparent means of livelihood and too emaciated to work.

First a poor-house was opened at Dongargarh and next month (that is October 1896) at Khairagarh. The rules framed for their management will be found in the Appendix.

Committees were formed with a certain non-official element, who visited these and had a hand in its proper management. Dongargarh poor-house was located outside the town below the great hill in a substantially well-built house. This house was intended for a dharmshala, but it had come to be used for keeping cows by the Gorakshni people. When the number increased, temporary huts had to be run to accommodate the additional number of paupers. Lepers were separately accommodated at Dongargarh.

At Khairagarh only temporary sheds were run up beyond Piparia, and ultimately this was closed, under medical advice, as cholera had broken out. The paupers were removed to Dongargarh.

A children's kitchen was also started at Khairagarh. The Superintendent of Jail managed it. *In this only very little children were kept in the barracks of female prisoners who looked after them. This practice was very successful. The big boys were kept in poor-houses. At the end of famine the orphans were thus handed over (1) to their relatives, (2) to their castemen, (3) to their village people, (4) to those of the same creed, and (5) to those of other creeds.*

The subjoined table gives the poor-house population in each month :—

Name of month.	Dongargarh poor-house.	Khairagarh poor-house.	Children's kitchen.	Total.
1896.				
September	45	37	...	82
October	62	60	6	128
November	55	56	21	132
December	90	80	24	194
1897.				
January	107	108	33	148
February	110	96	32	238
March	111	100	33	244
April	200	...	34	234
May	250	...	36	286
June	400	...	32	432
July	474	...	39	513
August	513	...	98	611
September	387	...	140	527
October	137	...	75	212
November	46	...	4	50
December	13	...	5	18

The paupers in poor-houses were generally low caste people, who had neither any idea of their respectable descent nor of polluting their food by contact. Their proportion is given below in order of their caste—Gahara, Mahar, Weaver, Chamar, Gond, Teli.

(APPENDIX.)

Poor-house rules.

40. (1) The malguzars, kotwals and patwaris are warned to send to the nearest outpost the paupers that might be found in their villages with no fixed abode and apparently wandering about. The head constable of the outpost shall send them with a constable to the nearest poor-house.

(2) The new arrivals are to be inspected by the Committee, including Hospital Assistant or any Medical Officer in charge.

(3) The Committee will classify them into those fit for, or unfit for, work.

(4) Those who are found fit would be sent to the nearest relief-work, and unfit will be admitted into poor-house.

(a) On admission each pauper was to receive clothes as under—

man	1 dhoti, 1 patka,
woman	2 dhotis,
child	2 patkas,

besides *the tats* for sleeping.

(5) Children without their parents were to be sent to the kitchen.

(6) Those who have regained their strength and are declared fit for work, were to be drafted to relief-work.

(7) The Superintendent of Jail to be in charge of children's kitchen at Khairagarh. The literate prisoners (Upper Primary Certificated) to teach those who are fit for education.

(8) The Committee to visit the poor-house once a week and hold parade for drafting able-bodied ones to relief-works. Hospital Assistant and Tahsildar to be present at this parade.

(9) The Committee was to consist of members—officials and non-officials. The Hospital Assistant and Inspector of Police to be *ex-officio* members of it. The Tahsildar and Head Master of the School to be President and Secretary of it, respectively.

(10) Every poor-house will have a Superintendent and one Head Warder, two cooks and one warder per 100. For every 50 a pauper mukaddum will be appointed.

(11) Daily report is to be made to the President of the poor-house population. The President, after conforming it with the registers, to order the Store-keeper to issue the rations

at the fixed scale of 9 chattaks per adult male, 7 chattaks per female and 5 chattaks per child.

(12) At Dongargarh Lal Bahour's shop to hold charge of the stores.

(13) At 7 A. M. all paupers to be turned out of doors for calls of nature, bathing, etc., under charge of the warder. The inside to be thoroughly cleaned before their return at 9 a. m.

(14) After return, roll-call to be taken by the Secretary and the meals to be distributed.

(15) Meals to be distributed in batches of 50 each brought in by their respective warders.

(16) The sick and much emaciated to receive special diet prescribed by the Hospital Assistant.

(17) A Vaccinator shall be on duty in poor-house hospital. He shall see that the sick get proper diet and sufficient clothing.

(18) Paupers suffering from infectious diseases to be segregated in the sheds to be erected for the purpose.

(19) For poor-house offence the paupers to be put on penal diet.

Opening of relief-works by public.

41. During their tours the Naib-Diwan, Tahsildar. Superintendent of Land Records and myself were urging the malguzars and well-to-do tenants to avail themselves of the cheap labour at hand, which would not only be greatly beneficial to them, but also to their fellow brethren, who were hard up for their day's morsel even. I am glad to say that many did respond, and heartily too, to the call.

Supply of seed-grains and details of sowing.

42. It was rightly apprehended that there would be a great drain on seed-stock and most of it will be on dhan. This afforded a great opportunity for the State to help the small tenantry with some seed. The method adopted to get real information to meet the difficulty properly was the following :—

In January 1897 a Mauzawar statement was prepared by each patwari, giving the details of seed-grains required by the tenants for kharif. Revenue Inspectors checked these figures very closely. Besides, they were ordered to prepare another statement showing the seed-stock with each tenant. Before the end of April these statements were in the hand of Superintendent of Land Records, who was instructed to fix a date and proceed to circle of each to collect the malguzars and tenants of such circle, to order them to arrange for the required quantities of seed-grains for themselves.

Moreover, every malguzar was separately told that he was held responsible for rendering help to his tenants. That he was bound to arrange for so much seed as may not allow the fields of his tenants to remain fallow. The gaontias were threatened with ejectment if they did not help the tenants. The result was that the gaontias and tenants became ready to supply the seed-grains, and wealthy malguzars purchased seed and brought it from other places as Dhamtari, Khariar, Kalahandi, etc. The Superintendent of Land Records and other officials were sent to Raipur, Bhandara and Sambalpur to purchase dhan and kodon worth R30,000. The total sum that must have been spent thus is estimated at R40,000. Before the rains set in there was made a speedy enquiry about how much has already been provided for by the tenants and malguzars. After this final enquiry and simultaneously with the setting in of the rains, dhan and kodon brought by the State was distributed as rapidly as could be possible. This was done at the right time. Had it been distributed earlier, there was every danger of its being wasted, and had it been late, it would have not germinated.

There were rare cases in which it was consumed by the tenants, and I think it could not have been better utilized if it did save some life.

This grain was distributed on the joint security of malguzars and tenants, and an interest of 2 annas in the rupee was stipulated till next harvest, just to save the State from delinquents. This interest stipulation did also stop some worthless request for more grain than what was really necessary. For rabi, too, similar arrangements were made, but the State help has been considered necessary.

Prevention of grain thefts.

43. To preserve the kharif crops the following measures were taken :—

(1) Appointment of village police. In each village a list was prepared of such persons who were suspected to rob the crops, and one person was selected per house from among tenants. Thus there were formed two gangs in each village, the one consisting of suspected persons and the other of tenants. These together constituted the village police. The gaontia to be an officer over them, and the kotwar to be a Head constable. Half of these men to rest at some place in the village till midday, and the other half to make the patrol. After midday the watches to be changed, the first half taking the place of the second half and *vice versâ*. In a few villages where the gaontias and kotwars were found unfit for such work, a person was appointed on R5 or R6 per mensem who was to make the gang keep guard in the above manner. At night the suspected persons were to keep watch and to be guarded in turn. During the daytime they had to do some work.

(2) The disabled persons were kept in a separate house and provided with food. In villages unable to make such arrangements the State took up the task at their cost.

(3) The above arrangements were applicable to petty thefts of grain, in which it was difficult to take the offenders to the open Courts. The number of such Courts being too limited, additional persons were empowered to enquire into such cases summarily, which will be detailed hereafter.

What remains to be done.

Both the kharif and rabi crops were good during the year. The future rabi crop also presents a favourable prospect. The rate of grain also did not fall much below the average rate. Hence I can gladly say that famine is over. Whatever more that is to be done in this State in this connection is the following :—

That seed be given to the raiyats of the jungly parganas—Lachhna, Kholwa and Dongargarh—who have lost their all and are without capital for cultivation.

That bullocks be supplied to such people that they might be again settled on their lands.

That other tenants be admitted in place of those who have fled, and that with this view the gaontias might be given a takavi.

In the budget of 1898 R5,000 have been placed for this purpose.

It is necessary to reduce the jama by a summary settlement of the village where the nikasi is decreased. In no case shall the land revenue be less than the nikasi. I am glad to say that Raja Sahib has issued orders on this matter.

Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund.

44. I am much obliged for the sum of R5,500 received from the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund for the relief of distressed people of this State. This money was received at a time when the raiyats of the jungly parganas stood in utmost need of seed and support, when the kharif crops were growing. Therefore R3,211-13-6 were given to such tenants for food. Rupees 1,166-1-6 were doled out for clothing and special diet to the inmates of the poor-houses.

When the famine was over some tenants and gaontias were found such that they had lost their plough-cattle and were prevented from cultivation for want of them. A sum of Rs. 1,050 was distributed to such persons. The money was doled out with utmost care, and an account of expenditure and reciepts is ready. The monthly account of this money was sent to the Political Agent's office.

The abstract of the account is as follows :—

Receipts.	*Expenditure.*				*Balance.*		
Rs.	Rs	a.	p.		Rs.	a.	p.
5,500	377	5	3	for clothing and blankets to the inmates of poor-houses.	72	1	0
	788	12	3	for special diet.			
	1,166	1	6				
	3,211	13	6	for food to tenants when crops were growing.			
	1,050	0	0	for purchase of bullocks.			
	4,261	13	6				
TOTAL	5,427	15	0				

Khan Bahadur Maulavi Saiyyid Muhammad Husain.

11th Mar. 1898.

No stress is laid for the recovery of these gifts. But those whose circumstances have been improved give back the gifts of their own accord. The money thus received is credited in the Charitable Fund and utilized for helping the other distressed persons.

Oral Evidence.

I have been six years in the Khairagarh State. Before that I was for a long period in Government service, for some time as Tahsildar and Extra Assistant Commissioner. It was often found necessary to give an order that wherever anyone had a large stock of grain, over and above his requirements, he should distribute it to persons in need of it, on the security of the State, and at a proper rate of interest. The Malguzars, mostly Lodhis and Kurmis, had stocks of grain. Patwaris gave me information of the existence of stocks of grain. I don't think grain stocks are as large in these parts as they used to be before the arrival of the railway.

When there was no railway in our State, the goods were imported by Banjaras. The Banjaras, who used to take their bullocks, belonged to the Jabalpur and other districts. They do not take their bullocks now. In my opinion, the Banjaras have now given up their occupation. They have undertaken different kinds of profession. There is no railway towards Mandla. The Banjaras are also called Labhanas. A large majority of them live in Mandla. They are generally Hindus, live like gipsies and call themselves Hindus. In our ilaka there was much distress in three parganas. Towards the hill side, and specially below it, there was much distress. The distressed people were generally Gondhs. Relief works were opened for their maintenance. On opening relief works, the intimation of their being opened was given through the Malguzars and Kotwars, because there was a Relief Committee in every village. In our Ilaka there were two poor-houses, one permanent poor-house and the other relief poor-house. Those who were invalids and unlikely to be fit for work, were maintained in the permanent poor-house. The weak and the sick, who had prospects of being able to work, were admitted in the relief poor-house. There were also Hospital Assistants. Those who were pronounced fit for work by the Hospital Assistant, Superintendent, and the Tahsildar, were sent on work, and those unfit for work were separated and sent to the poor-house with their consent. A large tank-work was opened for relief. There was a daily number of about 800—900 persons on relief works. Wages were paid at different rates. In the beginning a lower rate than an ordinary one was fixed. At first the work was started on contract system and then on payment by cowries, but when a suspicion arose, daily wages were fixed as follows:—

Men	. . . . .	2	annas each.
Women	. . . . .	1-6	„ „
Children	. . . . .	1	„ „

This is not an ordinary rate of wages in the Dehat (mufassil). These wages were paid in towns, such as Dongagarh, etc. Grain is paid in the Dehat in lieu of wages. When the tank-work was in progress, the dearest rate of grain at that time was 7 seers per rupee. Their rate of wages was increased up to 3 annas each. Towards the close of the famine, the Superintendent was directed to pay the labourers ¾ths of their wages and keep back the remaining ¼th, to be given to them at the time of their returning home. In this way, at the time of going back to their respective houses, each person got R4-5. During the last famine year, many persons died. The reason was because of their being weak from the beginning, and also because of their being accustomed to eat "Pej," etc. At the commencement, a large number of small works were opened; but when the great famine took place in 1897, necessity for opening large relief works was found. Though the famine is now over, still there is necessity for opening relief works in some places. I give this opinion, not for my own State, but for the whole of India, and specially for the Central Provinces and North-Western Provinces, the circumstances of which I am well aware of. Small tenants should be given such help as will enable them to preserve their implements of husbandry. The condition of the tenants who had a stock of grain, was good. Help was given to the tenants by supplying R50,000 worth of grain from Sambalpur. During the last famine, help was given in our State as far as it was practicable. The people of our State did not beg at stations. A complaint to this effect was once found only in a newspaper, and on another occasion, a similar complaint was made by a missionary, but on personal inquiries I found nothing. An inquiry on this account was also made by the Political Agent and the Commissioner, but they also found nothing. After execution of a formal agreement, I made over above 100 and 125 orphans to the missionaries. The missionaries did not give any assistance to our State. At one time only they distributed some money at Dongargarh. When I came to know of it, I put a stop to this practice, and asked them to go to the poor-house and make over the money to the Superintendent who would accept it with thanks. I made them an oral as well as a written request that they should make inspections of the poor-houses and send the inspection notes to me, but they did not send any as yet.

The reports of births and deaths are, as far as I can say, worth believing. The average number of deaths has much increased, and that of births decreased, to some extent. There are seven registers in the State in which births and deaths are entered. Besides, there is a separate register for the Municipality. The Kotwars also make reports of births and deaths. They well know that their failure to make a report is an offence, and so they are regular in making their reports.

MR. G. D. OSWELL, Principal, Raj Kumar College, Raipur, called in and examined.

Mr. G. D. Oswell.

11th Mar. 1898.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

I have the honour to remark that my experience, having been limited to the administration of the Charitable Fund, extends over a very limited portion of the area covered by the points engaging the attention of the Commission, and I do not consider myself competent to express an opinion on the points (A), (B), (C), and I have no recommendation to make regarding (D).

(*President.*)—Were you Secretary of the Charitable Fund?—Yes.

When did your work begin?—In the first week of March.

At that time I suppose you received your first remittances?—We received the first remittance just about that time.

Which particular method of spending the money is in your opinion best?—Object No. IV certainly. I also think the distribution of cloth and blankets important.

How were clothes and blankets distributed?—They were generally distributed on the requisition of officers in charge of circles.

Where were they purchased?—A large amount from weavers and the rest from local petty dealers, and also from blanket makers, of which there is a small class at Raipur. We gave the weavers advances.

Did you make any advances to blanket makers?—Yes, small advances. They were a smaller class. The relief given to the weavers was undoubtedly effective. We allowed them a small return to carry on their trade.

Do you think from what you have seen that the weavers are fit to work on the roads in the sun?—Only the lower classes. We didn't relieve their lower class to the same extent as the higher, as they could go to works. We distinguished between the classes.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—How much did you receive from the Charitable Relief Fund?—Rupees 3,18,000.

How much did you spend?—Rupees 3,06,000 and refunded the balance.

How much did you spend on Object No. IV?—Nearly R2,77,000.

Did you relieve agriculturists in cash or seed?—In cases where there was any difficulty in getting seed, relief officers were directed to import seed.

Had you any difficulty in getting seed?—The bulk of the grants was given in money.

Did you buy any cattle?—Yes, some.

Were the cattle grazed in Government forests?—Government threw open their reserves to us, but we did not use them.

Did you relieve several kinds of artizans?—Chiefly weavers, also bangle makers, petty traders, *sonars*, and metal-workers.

Was there the same system all over?—Yes, a certain proportion was kept for sale and the sale-proceeds credited to the general fund. Two-thirds was given back to the artizans to continue their trade.

Approximately, what was the loss sustained?—In the case of weavers from R9,000 to R10,000.

How many families did you relieve?—Over 3,500.

For how many months?—From March to the end of October.

How was the loss recouped?—We received a subsidy of R4,000 from Government, and the rest stands as a permanent loss to the Charitable Relief Fund.

What was the number in a family?—Generally about five. Very often there was an old father and mother dependent.

Did you relieve the weavers to the extent that they needed relief?—Yes, and smaller artizans we relieved also: about 103 heads of families.

For the same period?—Yes, from March to October.

Had you a cheap grain shop?—Yes, at Raipur.

When was it started?—On the 25th of May. We consulted Mr. James, the Honorary Secretary of the Fund, and then started it.

What was the total quantity of grain purchased for distribution?—About R17,000 worth, between two thousand and three thousand maunds. We purchased it from 7 to 8 seers per rupee, and in some cases when the market rate was 6 we managed to buy and sell at 10.

How long did your shop continue?—From the end of May to practically the middle of October.

What class of persons was relieved?—A family whose joint income amounted to five rupees, or under.

Were they only allowed to buy a fixed quantity?—A family could not buy more than two rupees' worth.

What was the loss sustained by these proceedings?—Rupees 2,658.

How many families were maintained?—Two thousand and ten heads of families; in some cases there were four members in the family, in some five. There were about 10,000 people.

For how many months?—About five months.

Do you think people would have gone to relief works if they had not been relieved in this way?—I think not.

Then what would have become of them?—They would have suffered great privation and starved. Children would have been the chief sufferers as they are more liable to sickness. I think there would have been more mortality.

Could they have availed themselves of any system of Government relief?—No. I don't think they could have come under section 34, because they had some income. They were not absolutely destitute.

Did the opening of the shop affect private trade?—No, I don't think so, except in a way advantageous to the general community. It compelled private traders to sell.

What sort of stuff were they selling?—Stuff adulterated 8 per cent. At Raipur the usual adulteration is 2 per cent.

Did you make personal enquiries?—Yes, and found that was the case. I think there was a very large amount of adulteration. *Mr. G. D. Oswell.* *11th Mar. 1898.*

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—All through the famine or only at the first?—It was most towards the rains, about June and early in July.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—What was used for adulteration?—Sand and *chini*.

Was it easily detected?—Yes.

(*President.*)—And the people just accepted it?—Yes.

(*Mr. Bose*).—Could they have helped it?—I don't think so. The grain-trader was too much for them.

Did the prices fluctuate very much?—Yes, a good deal. I don't think the opening of a small shop had any effect except to temporarily steady prices. The actual operations were very small. The rumours that we were going to open the shop had that effect.

Did you find any difficulty in getting grain from local traders?—No. There was no combination against us.

You had private charity here before the Charitable Relief Fund was started?—Yes, we had for a short time. Relief kitchens were started by the Deputy Commissioner and private charity carried them on from the middle of October to the end of December. We also had some relief works till Government took entire charge of them.

(*President.*)—Have you any suggestions to make as to improvements?—Nothing but slight modifications of the four objects.

What are the modifications you would suggest?—I put in in writing revised heads for the four objects of the Fund.

1. In supplementing the subsistence ration which alone is provided from public funds, by the addition of small comforts, whether of food, clothing, blankets, and attendance, for the aged or infirm, for patients in hospitals, for children and the like.

2. In providing clothing, blankets, extra comforts, attendance, and education for all orphans, whether in Government or private orphanages, during the period of acute distress, and in providing for the maintenance of all orphans left on the hands of Government after the famine.

3. In relieving the numerous class of poor but respectable persons who either do not come within the scope of Government relief, or are too proud to ask for it; such relief to be given chiefly through the medium of cheap grain shops.

4. In helping agriculturists, who are liable to lose their holdings without such help, with seed-grain, cattle, and subsistence, and in helping artizans with the means of carrying on their trade, and in restoring to their original position, when acute distress is subsiding, those who have lost their all in the struggle, and in giving them a fresh start in life.

At the Commissioner's Office, Raipur.

THIRTY-SECOND DAY.

Saturday, the 12th March 1898.

PRESENT:

SIR J. B. LYALL, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I. (PRESIDENT.)

SURGEON-COLONEL J. RICHARDSON.
MR. T. W. HOLDERNESS, C.S.I.
MR. T. HIGHAM, C.I.E.
RAI BAHADUR B. K. BOSE, C.I.E.
MR. A. D. YOUNGHUSBAND, (*Temporary Member for the Central Provinces*).
Mr. H. J. MCINTOSH, *Secretary*.

SURGEON-MAJOR J. L. POYNDER, Civil Surgeon, Raipur, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

(A).—DEPARTURES FROM THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES FAMINE CODE, WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES DURING THE PRESENT FAMINE.

As far as I know the principles of the Central Provinces Famine Code have been adhered to during the recent famine.

(B).—DEGREE OF SUCCESS WHICH HAS ATTENDED THE MEASURES ADOPTED, CONSIDERED PRIMARILY WITH REGARD TO THE RELIEF OF DISTRESS AND SAVING OF LIFE, AND SECONDARILY WITH REGARD TO ECONOMY.

A considerable amount of distress has been relieved, and enormous numbers of lives have been saved by the relief afforded. But I am distinctly of opinion that the relief of distress by the construction of roads by the Public Works Department is not the most economical form of giving relief, nor is it the most effective way of reaching the really distressed. *Sur.-Maj. J. L. Poynder.* *12th Mar. 1898.*

(C).—ADVICE AS TO THE MEASURES AND METHODS OF WORKING WHICH SEEM LIKELY TO PROVE MOST EFFECTIVE IN FUTURE IN THESE TWO RESPECTS.

I am of opinion that to be effective, works should be found in the villages as much as possible in preference to road making, for the following reasons:—

(1) It is very difficult to provide adequate shelter for the workers, and I feel convinced that a large

Sur.-Maj. J. L. Poynder.

12th Mar. 1898.

number of deaths were caused or accelerated by the exposure in the hot weather to the heat of the sun, and in the rains to the cold and damp. Especially when the people were underfed.

(2) It is not advisable to collect large bodies of people together as they are very liable to fall victims to epidemic diseases, such as cholera.

(3) In nearly every village some water-supply exists, which can generally be improved, or wells dug on the roads. In many places the water-supply was very deficient and people often went off to drink from dirty unprotected pools thereby contracting disease.

(4) The formation of roads requires the engagement, at very high rates, of an enormous supervising staff. Many of them quite unfit for supervisors.

(5) The payments have to be made through these agents to a large extent, and it is probable that a considerable amount of money was misappropriated.

(D).—OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS OR OPINIONS THOUGHT LIKELY TO BE USEFUL IN FUTURE FAMINES.

I believe as regards the actual relief of the destitute and the saving of life, that a system of village relief and payments made in grain would be much more effective and lead to much more permanent improvement to the villages and the country generally than the construction of indifferent roads which probably the funds of the district will be insufficient to keep in repair.

Notes on the diet scales issued to Famine Relief Workers.

In submitting the following notes it will be convenient to discuss the quality and quantity of the food supply.

2. Next to consider the manner of its supply with reference to the different classes of labourers.

3. The measures by which these defects may be in some degree remedied.

The diet issued to the people on Famine Relief Work is compared in the attached table with the diets issued in the jails. It will be seen that there is a great deficiency in the amount of vegetables. Less fatty matters, and much less nitrogenous matter in the shape of dal and no gram, which is also a very nutritious grain, and no saccharine matter at all, no separate condiments.

The jail dietary, which is considered by authorities to be insufficient and not well selected, is under close supervision and is generally of fair quality.

The grain issued at Famine times is necessarily not nearly so closely supervised and is probably not of such good quality. It is extremely difficult to obtain vegetables in anything like sufficient quantity, and the amount of fat in the shape of oil or ghi, is generally not supplied at all or in quite insufficient quantities.

It will also be noticed that the condiments and vegetable are classed together and in the minimum ration the quantity of salt, ghi, vegetables is diminished. I can see no sort of adequate reason for this, as the vegetables are given not only as food but for their action on the system generally.

In the jail dietary on the other hand these articles of diet are very properly maintained, while only the staple grain is reduced in lower scales. The total quantity of rice in the full jail diet is 13 chattaks and ½ chattak of goor is also issued, 2⅔ chattaks of additional vegetable, so that the prisoner on labour gets 18½ chattaks of solid more or less bulky food, while the famine labourer gets 14½ chattaks and probably the oil and vegetables are almost invariably wanting in the famine labourer's dietary. While the jail worker always gets his full ration of every thing.

As regards the minimum ration, it will be seen that prisoners undergoing simple imprisonment and juveniles over 12 get 14½ chattaks of solid food while females and children under 12 get 13⅓ chattaks of solid, while the minimum ration for workers on famine work for males is only 9¼ chattaks and for females 8¼ chattaks. I think there can be little doubt that this ration is entirely insufficient, and to expect half starved people to work at any sort of outdoor work on this ration and to keep their health is quite impracticable.

As regards the division of the workers into classes, the practice does not appear to be satisfactory. As far as I understand from the officer in charge of works, the workers appeared to be classed A, B, C, D, according to the work they were put on quite irrespective of the amount of work they did. Thus people on quarrying stone or breaking metal were classed as class A or B, while if they were put on earthwork they were classed as C or D. This system appears to me to prevent a strong, healthy man from earning a full wage for a full day's work if he happened to be in a part of a road where they were doing earthwork, and moreover a full day's work should receive a full day's wage quite irrespective of whether it happens to be digging moorum or stone, if the task of each is fairly apportioned. Thus on some of the roads the people complained bitterly that they were only earning 1 anna 9 pies and the women 1⅕ annas per day, and the reason was, I was told by the officer in charge, that they were on Class C work. The price of rice then was 8 seers to the rupee, of this rice at least 1½ seers would be wastage, so that those people were at that time only earning enough to pay for 12 chattaks of the commonest rice 1½ chattaks to 3 chattaks of which would be waste, leaving the men about 10 chattaks of rice and nothing wherewith to purchase the necessary dal, vegetables or ghi.

At no time did I come across any gangs earning as much as laid down in Appendix III of the Famine Code.

In order to meet to some extent the defects in the dietary and classification I would suggest the following alteration: that there be only two classes of diet, A and B. One for full workers and one for lesser workers and women as below.

	A Chattaks.	B Chattaks.
Rice	13	11
Dal	2	2
Vegetable	2	2
Oil or ghi	1	1
Gur	½	½
Salt	¼	¼

Children under 12 years to have half the full diet, children too young to work to have ½ the female ration. I would also when practicable strongly advocate payment in grain or at any rate that the full ration of rice be issued to each worker and the balance in cash.

Comparative Table of Famine and Jail diet.

1 seer=16 chattaks and 1 chattak=2 oz.

RATIONS.	FULL DIET FOR FAMINE WORKERS.				MINIMUM RATIONS.				REMARKS.
	Males.		Females.		Males.		Females.		
	lb. oz.	Country weights. sr. ch.	lb. oz.	Country weights. sr. ch.	lb. oz.	Country weights. sr. ch.	lb. oz.	Country weights. sr. ch.	
*Rice	1 8 =	0 12	1 4	0 10	1 0 =	0 8	0 14 =	0 7	
*Pulse	0 4 =	0 2	0 4 =	0 2	0 2 =	0 1	0 2 =	0 1	
Salt	0 ½ =	0 ¼	0 ½ =	0 ¼	0 ½ =	0 ¼	0 ½ =	0 ¼	
Ghee or oil	0 1 =	0 ½	0 ½ =	0 ¼	0 ½ =	0 ¼	0 ½ =	0 ¼	
*Condiment and vegetable	0 1 =	0 ½	0 1 =	0 ½	0 ½ =	0 ¼	0 ½ =	0 ¼	
	*Solid food 14½		Solid food 12½		Solid food 9¼		Solid food 8¼		

Jail diet.

Rations.	No I. For male adult prisoners on labour.	No. II. For male simple imprisonment scale under-trial and juveniles over 12.	No. III. For women and juveniles under 12.	Remarks.
	Chattaks.	Chattaks.	Chattaks.	
* Rice	11	9	8	
* Dâl	2	2	2	
Salt	¼	¼	¼	
Oil	¼	¼	¼	
* Vegetables	3	3	3	
* Gram or rice	1½ or 2	...	...	
* Gur	1½	½	½	
Spices	40 grains.	40 grains.	40 grains.	
	* Solid food 18½	* Solid food 14½	Solid food 13½	

(*President.*)—When did you take charge of Raipur?—In 1895.

And have you been here ever since?—Yes.

When did you begin to observe signs of distress in this district?—I cannot say that I personally observed any signs till the famine was pretty well established. It was not brought to my notice particularly.

Was that in the beginning of 1897?—Yes.

What work was entrusted to you?—Famine works were opened in various places, and I had to superintend the supply of drugs, to see to the posting of Hospital Assistants in various places and generally to look after the establishment of field hospitals.

Were poor-houses established by private liberality before Government established them?—Yes, I think so. I saw one at Aran and there was some relief going on at Baloda Bagh; no regular poor-houses, but a good deal of private relief was being distributed by malguzars.

When was that?—I think in February 1897.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Were you relieved of your duties at Head-quarters?—No, another officer was sent.

You remained at Head-quarters?—Yes, generally, not altogether.

Don't you think it would be a better arrangement if the District Medical Officer who knows the district were relieved of his duties to go about and inspect?—I doubt it. I think the work is sufficiently well carried out by Inspecting Officers.

That was your chief duty as regards the famine, the providing of drugs and looking to medical comforts?—That was the principal portion. I also had charge of large poor-houses, and there were other poor-houses which I visited in conjunction with outlying dispensaries.

How many had you at Head-quarters?—At one time about 2,500, *i.e.* the maximum number. They were just outside, near the jail.

What establishment had you to look after 2,500 people?—We had not enough Hospital Assistants. I should have been very glad to have had more.

What was the condition of the people at first?—Some of them were considerably emaciated. Most of them had run down in health.

How many were under treatment at one time?—I have no clear recollection; I should think at one time between 200 to 300 people were in the hospital.

Did many die?—I cannot remember how many. I think at the worst time the numbers were 100 per thousand per annum. There was a good deal of intermittent fever in the district.

When were poor-houses established?—I think there was a small commencement in February 1897. I cannot remember exactly.

Did they come quickly?—Rather quickly.

Were they people from your own district or mostly travellers?—I think mostly people of the district.

Were they sent to the poor-houses or did they come of their own accord?—Sometimes they came of their own accord.

(*Mr. Younghusband.*)—In Raipur they opened from the 1st of January, did they not?—Yes.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—In what months did the mortality chiefly occur?—In July, August and September.

What sort of diseases did they chiefly suffer from?—Diarrhœa, fever, *Cancrum Oris*, and ulceration of the mouth.

Were there any scorbutic diseases?—Yes, a great many. There were a good number of cases in the jail as well.

Had you sufficient medical comforts?—Yes, I think so.

Were you about the district much?—I was in medical charge of the whole district and inspected the poor-houses.

I understand the medical officer who came to your assistance did most of the inspection?—Yes.

(*Mr. Younghusband.*)—Was he not specially put in charge of Public Works Department relief works?—Yes, I think so. I had been round the works beforehand.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Did you personally inspect the gangs on big works?—Yes.

What was the physical condition of the people?—Pretty fair. Nothing like the people in the poor-houses.

Did they seem to thrive upon the diet?—They did fairly. There were a good many complaints at times.

Still would there not be complaints at all times?—Yes; and there were several cases connected with the payment of people that created difficulty. Many gangs complained that they had not been paid for seven or eight days. Then again many were paid in rupees, and found great difficulty in changing the rupees. Particular brands of rupees were not taken at all or heavy percentage charge levied. The consequence was that people used to hoard their money.

Do you think the system of payment is a serious defect in the management?—Yes, I think so and caused much distress.

And having changed their rupees was there any difficulty in converting them into grain?—I think there was grain to be had on all works.

Was the grain supplied sound grain?—In some places it was very bad. There was dirt and a good deal of sweepings.

Who is responsible for this, the contractor?—Yes, I think a contractor was put on to supply grain at the works.

Do you think this inferior kind of grain had any prejudicial effect on the health of the people?—Yes.

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Had you kitchens attached to works?—On all big works.

Close at hand?—Yes.

Do you think the mothers fed their children?—Well, they fed them from their own wage.

Was there much emaciation?—I think the people prefer to feed themselves rather than their children. I think the children were starved.

Was there much starvation?—A fair amount. It was distinctly noticeable.

(*President.*)—Were the children getting a dole?—I think they were supposed to get a dole.

(*Mr. Younghusband.*)—Do you refer to any particular period?—I think I am referring to the whole time.

You did not find things improve as you went on?—No.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—What is your opinion as to what should be done in dealing with children under such circumstances?—I think that a great deal might be done by giving grain instead of paying people if it could be arranged. My own opinion is that a great many more lives would be saved in this way. People when paid in money are apt to scrape and hoard all their earnings.

As a matter of fact, do you think they did save?—I think they did, in some cases, because they chose to starve their children as well as themselves.

(*President.*)—I suppose children will show signs sooner than adults?—Yes I think so. They would lose flesh a good deal more rapidly.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—What was the cause of increased mortality from July. Your system was well organized. Why did the mortality suddenly go up to such an extent in June, July, August, September and October?—We had a very heavy epidemic of cholera.

But the cholera months were not when the mortality was highest. What was the cause?—I think aggravated fever.

Was it a specific kind of fever?—It seemed to be very bad malarial fever, worse than I have ever known.

Was there anything to indicate that there was anything contagious about it?—No.

Do you attribute it to malaria?—Yes, owing to the period of the year.

(*President.*)—Were the people that the fever killed people suffering from privation?—Yes, and they were less able to resist its attacks.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Was this all over the district?—Yes.

(*Dr Richardson.*)—Did many well-to-do people suffer also?—Yes, very severely. In this town at one time they said that nearly every house had people suffering.

You think it was simply the ordinary malarial fever of the year in an intense form?—Yes.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Did you make special enquiry?—Yes.

That is the conclusion you came to?—Yes.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Did the people suffer from insufficient protection in the matter of clothing?—They were much worse off in the matter of hutting. They don't get much clothing ordinarily. The hutting arrangements were very defective.

Was there any reason for that. I should have thought in this part of the country you could get quantities of bamboo for hutting?—They said they could not get enough grass. They had very bad huts.

The people suffering from diarrhœa, dysentery and fever would suffer much from lying about in the damp?—Yes, they did.

Do you see any insuperable difficulties connected with the provision of shelter?—I can not say. I am not prepared to give an opinion.

Whose duty was it to look after the hutting?—The Executive Engineer's.

Do you think the diet on the whole is sufficient and satisfactory?—I think it is sufficient to support life, but was not a very good diet and it was deficient in fats.

Would you increase the D minimum wage?—Yes; I think it is deficient for a working man. It is sufficient for a man in a poor-house who is doing nothing.

As a matter of fact, did those receiving the D wage do anything more than nominal work?—I think they did.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Did they get it in the form of money?—No, grain.

Do you think the B wage enough?—No, I do not.

Do you think the minimum wage should be expunged altogether?—Yes, under any circumstances.

Do you think the B wage is deficient as regards quality or quantity?—Broadly in both.

As regards children under 7 years of age, you said there was a good deal of emaciation. What do you propose? You don't seem to have had kitchens?—There were kitchens, but children do not seem to have gone there much.

You had no great experience in feeding the children in kitchens?—No, there were very few children at the kitchens. The children were at orphanages.

Did they get on well there?—Yes, but they were brought there too late.

Was there disproportionate mortality among young children and old people?—Yes.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Have you any proposals to make which would be of use in a future famine?—I think the most serious defect is that they could not get the full ration of grain they were supposed to get, and there was difficulty in changing the rupee.

Could not that matter be dealt with by the local organization?—It was pointed out.

(*President.*)—They won't change the rupee?—If you pay the natives a rupee of 1872 or about that time, they won't take it; it won't pass; whether this is merely a trade freak or the doing of the banias I do not know. I am perfectly certain that on the works an enormous amount of money was lost to the workers by these means.

They were being victimized?—Yes, and when they were being paid in bulk they complained they were not paid the full amount.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—You talked about the unwholesome grain, I would have thought that the medical officer would have reported it?—It was brought to notice, but there was a large amount in stock which could not be changed all at once.

Had you a sufficiency of medical subordinates to go about and look after the sanitary condition of the people?—We had a fairly good number.

(*President.*)—I suppose before the rain began there was no shelter on the works?—I think tatties were provided. In some places the people were very much exposed to the sun in the middle of the day.

What do you think of the utility of the roads made?—They are useful if kept in repair. Some have not been finished at all, but have been left more or less in a soft condition without any consolidation. In the rains they will be mere muddy tracks.

You expressed the opinion that the system of village relief will be more effective. Do you mean village works or village relief without works?—I mean works.

Near the villages?—Yes, and deepening the tanks or digging wells, putting up efficient bunds, and digging trenches to carry off the drainage of the villages.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—A suggestion has been made that the poor-house diet would be sufficient if 4 ounces of vegetables and 6 grains of condiments were added. Is that your opinion?—I think that would be a good thing. What, is more important is to increase the fatty portion of the diet, either the oil or ghee.

You think the ghee or oil should be increased?—Yes.

What would you make it?—A full ounce.

Is the pulse right?—I should either increase it or give more rice. I think 14 ounces of rice is insufficient unless it is weighed after being cleaned.

If you gave 4 ounces of vegetables would it be sufficient for a woman or a man?—I should prefer to give more flour and rather less vegetables.

Is it difficult to get vegetables?—Yes, in large quantities.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—What is the rule, to give children as much as they could eat?—Yes.

(*President.*)—Theoretically is one quarter of the rate enough for a child?—I am not prepared to answer the question.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—You are not prepared to express an opinion on this?—I think the point is that children required more fat and less dal than adults.

What do they get in their own villages?—Rice principally.

You want to give them more than they would get in their own villages?—Well, they did not come to us till they were rather low, and it was necessary to bring them up again.

I suppose as a matter of fact extras were given?—Nearly always. We had a large quantity of Mellin's Food, which we distributed to the children in addition to their other diet. A free hand was given to the medical officer to give large quantities of milk.

Mr. Harriot in paragraph 16 lays down the following average for children:—5 chattaks of grain, 3¼ of pulse, ½ of salt, ¼ of ghee or oil and ½ of vegetables. He found that for children that was a fair working average. What do you think?—I think that would be a very fair working average.

Do you think that would be reasonable?—Yes, if the children were in good condition. I think it is almost impracticable to work out scales for children of different ages. It is much better to lay down a general scale. I should give them the same dole for any age up to 12 years of age.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—With regard to the workers' ration, that hardly comes into the matter, the only point is to see whether the cash is sufficient?—I do not think there is any necessity to go into the details of the workers' ration, because they never got that ration.

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Did you ascertain the various wages the workers got according to their classification?—In some cases I did.

If they were able to get the full amount of grain would that have been sufficient?—No.

Is that under all the scales A, B, C and D?—Yes, as far as I could make out, nobody was being paid according to A class.

Were people getting the B wage?—They were supposed to be. As far as I could make it out the B scale was not sufficient. The money was not sufficient.

Supposing a man is able to buy the grain equivalent of B, would that be sufficient?—I think the B scale would be insufficient for a man or woman, *à fortiori* this would apply to other scales.

(*President.*)—Why?—I don't think it provides enough of food. The difficulty is that B equivalents are calculated on the prices of the staple grain. A man could just buy a bare ration. He could not have bought dal or ghee.

Supposing he could have bought 19 chattaks under the B wage?—He could only have bought rice.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—You recommend, if possible, wages should be paid in grain. Wholly in grain or partly in other things?—In grain.

(*Mr. Younghusband.*)—Your experience of relief works is chiefly confined to the early part. Were there any particular difficulties about irregular payments later? Were there no improvements afterwards? You know that Lala Kapur Chand took over the business afterwards. Were there any complaints on this account then?—Yes, there were some. I made some complaints myself.

Was the grain bad?—Not as good as it might have been.

SURGEON-MAJOR A. SILCOCK, Civil Surgeon, Bilaspur, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

The whole of the district generally was affected but the distress was not so great in Janjgir tahsil as in other parts of the district. The population of Bilaspur depend almost entirely for their subsistenee on a solitary crop, *viz.*, rice. For the cultivation of rice an abundant rainfall is necessary. Besides periodical showers, four heavy downpours are required, one in each of the four monsoon months. The September one should be late in the month.

Of the rabi crops a large number of the villages have none whatever.

The late famine was due to the failure of the rains in two successive years, 1895 and 1896, and the consequent failure of the rice crop of these years. In both years the rains suddenly ceased early in September. Bilaspur possesses a fertile soil and a fairly constant rainfall, and under normal circumstances, the land produces rice in abundance and the people enjoy a fair measure of material well-being.

Scattered throughout the district are several thousand tanks. These though chiefly intended for providing water during the dry weather months for man and beast, are frequently used for irrigating the crops in their immediate neighbourhood. Canals or water reservoirs for irrigation are entirely absent.

The general mortality shows very clearly how acute the distress has been. The death-rate of the district in 1893 was 23·93, in 1894 it was 28·37, in 1895 it was 26·45 and in 1896 it was 47·54. When we come to the year 1897 it rises up by leaps and bounds, showing how long-continued privation had undermined the constitution of the people.

The following statement shows the monthly death-rates per *mille* per annum during 1896 and 1897:—

Month.	1896.	1897.
January	34·14	37·11
February	41·67	33·45
March	29·71	59 41
April	28·11	61·81
May	73·90	87·69
June	86·76	137·45
July	51·90	121·61
August	57·15	153·62
September	42·45	138·82
October	45·20	125·11
November	39·30	79·89
December	40·20	57·73

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Though the mortality would have been much higher but for the relief measures, still by a more timely application of these measures a great amount of it could have been avoided.

Gratuitous relief was given through the medium of poor-houses in which residence was a condition of relief, through the medium of kitchens where residence was not a condition of relief, and by means of money doles to people in their houses.

Gratuitous home relief saved many lives and kept villages and households together.

It would have been better if the gratuitous relief given to the people at their homes had been in the form of grain instead of money. Grain could not always be had in the villages, and the people who received the money dole had to go to the nearest market, frequently a long distance off, to bring it. Many of these people were weak and debilitated and unable to travel.

In many cases also the money was stolen from them before they bought any grain with it.

As a result of the famine many petty cultivators of the non-proprietary class have been permanently injured and have left their villages, and many of them will not speedily recover without help.

In my opinion and in that of all natives whom I have consulted on the subject, the excavating, deepening or enlarging of village tanks would have been the best form of relief work for this district. A large number of the villages of the district have not a sufficient number of tanks to provide drinking water for man and beast during the dry weather months. Village tanks as a form of relief-work would prevent the people from leaving their houses and families from breaking up, and would be a permanent benefit to the villages in which they were constructed. They would also be a security against a deficient rainfall in the future or at least mitigate to a great extent its evil effects.

Blankets and bedding were only provided for the hospitals on the relief-works. They were badly needed by many of the workers and inmates of the relief kitchens.

The Officer-in-charge of every relief-camp or the inspecting or controlling officer should be vested with magisterial powers sufficient to enable him to maintain order in camp. On sanitary grounds alone this power is necessary to prevent people from defiling the water-supply or violating the sanitary regulations of the camp.

The Officer-in-charge, however, of each relief-work ought to be a man much above the class generally employed in the

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late famine. No man below the rank of a Tahsildar should be placed in charge of a relief-work of any size.

Four poor-houses were opened in this district during the late famine, and the population of each was continuously high. In August the daily average number in these four poor-houses amounted to 7,526. The inmates were chiefly agricultural labourers, weavers and petty cultivators. People of a better class and respectable position objected to resort to the poor-house for relief, but the lower classes resorted to it freely.

The mortality of all four poor-houses was very high throughout, but especially so in July, August, and September. This high mortality was almost entirely due to the condition of the inmates when brought to the poor-houses. Large numbers were brought in moribund, many *in articulo mortis*, and many actually dead.

The cold and damp caused by heavy showers of rain in July, August, September, and October assisted in running up the mortality very considerably during these months.

The mortality was highest in the poor-houses of Pandaria and Mungeli, where the condition of the newly admitted inmates was worst.

Distress was also most felt in these parts of the district.

Many of the inmates of Bilaspur poor-house were wanderers from the Raipur District, and many of the inmates of Pendra poor-house were wanderers from the neighbouring State of Rewa. A few of the inmates of Pandaria poor-house came from the neighbouring Feudatory State of Kawardha.

The physical condition of a large number entering the poor-house was something terrible, and many had come long distances.

From these two facts alone it was evident that the severity of the famine was very great.

The number of wanderers and orphans admitted into the poor-houses proved very clearly that many households had been broken up.

The poor-house population was kept down by systematically drafting to the relief-works and to their homes all those who could be thus disposed of.

The poor house diet prescribed by the Famine Code is not sufficient.

With the addition of 4 ozs. of fresh vegetables and a fixed quantity, say 60 grains, of condiments, it would be sufficient as a subsistence diet for people free from disease and who were not required to do anything but the slightest form of labour. It had to be varied and augmented very much in the case of sick and weakly persons who require such diet as milk, sago, arrowroot and soup.

The rules and appendices of the Famine Code as to the management of poor-houses are not sufficiently explicit and detailed or in all respects suitable.

I would make the following suggestions for the improvement of poor-house management and for amending the Provincial Famine Code. They are based on my experience of the famine during the current year.

Chapter VII.—The full and minimum rations prescribed are both deficient in vegetables, and the quantity of condiments should be definitely stated in each. In each of these rations I should prescribe 4 ozs. of fresh vegetables and 60 grains of condiments.

Chapter VIII, paragraph 91.—European ladies when available to be included among the "visitors" to the poor-house. The visits paid by European ladies to the Bilaspur and Mungeli poor-houses did an immense amount of good, especially in the hospital wards of the women and children.

Paragraph 93.—In addition to a hospital each poor-house should have a ward attached to it where all new admissions could be accommodated and kept under observation for a space of ten days.

All new admissions who are unprotected from small-pox should, unless prevented by sickness, be vaccinated as soon as possible.

Appendix IV, paragraph 2.—The Superintendent should have no office work whatever. During the day he should be continually about the poor-house exercising general supervision. At night he should sleep at the poor-house and make frequent surprise visits to different parts of it.

For a poor-house of 2,000—4,000 inmates, a man of the rank of Extra Assistant Commissioner is necessary for the post of Superintendent.

Paragraph 3.—One Hospital Assistant and two Dressers are required for every 200 patients in hospital.

The hospital should consist of the following wards:—

1. Wards for general diseases.
2. A ward for small-pox cases.
3. Do. cholera cases.
4. Do. sloughing dysentery and diarrhœa and sloughing sores.
5. Do. ophthalmia and other forms of eye diseases.

Hospital sheds built like those at present in use in Bilaspur poor-house are in every way suitable. They are long tile-roofed sheds varying in length from 100—250 feet, 16 feet broad and 8 feet high at the sides. The floors are raised 1 foot high with well rammed earth, and the side-walls, 6 feet high, are made of wattle and daub (split bamboos and mud). Free ventilation is provided for by doorways, apertures about 1 foot square in the side-walls, and by a space 14 inches between the top of the side-walls and the roof. These sheds allow of a row of beds on each side, and by the frequent use of lime and yellow earth can be kept neat and clean. Owing to its inflammable nature, grass should not be used in the roofs of hospital sheds.

Paragraph 6.—Warders should be paid hands and should not be paupers. Pauper warders are without influence or authority, and consequently are of little or no use in preventing the commission of nuisances or in maintaining discipline and order.

Paragraph 7.—As such a large number of poor-house inmates suffer from dysentery and diarrhœa, 4 per cent. of scavengers are required.

There should be a staff of sweepers on duty by night as well as day.

The great difficulty in poor-houses is in the dieting and nursing of the sick, and I feel sure that if the services of several European nurses could have been secured during the recent famine, several hundreds of lives would have been saved. Pauper sick attendants are of little use, and cannot be depended upon.

With regard to the hospital management generally and the sanitary precautions necessary to avoid *cancrum oris* and other diseases in poor-houses and orphanages, I have no suggestions to offer beyond those contained in the rules and orders issued during the year by the Administrative Medical Officer.

Legal powers are necessary to enable relief officers or district authorities, to send persons found begging and wanderers without any means of support and persons who, being able, refuse to work at the relief-works, to poor-houses and to detain them there.

A certain amount of compulsion was exercised in this direction with regard to the wanderers and beggars.

Some light work was exacted from the poor-house inmates, such as brick making, weaving, making native cots and building, plastering and whitewashing their own barracks.

Poor-house inmates were also employed as servants and sick attendants.

A certain amount of compulsion had to be used at first to detain some of the inmates in the poor-house. All along many of them had a tendency to wander away from the poor-house and beg in the neighbouring town during the day.

Attendance at relief-centres tended to become unmanageably large.

During the hot weather of 1897, whilst large numbers of people were collected for several days at Mungeli for the purpose of receiving money advances for grain, cholera broke out among them and many deaths occurred.

Relief-kitchens during a famine are not only necessary in connection with relief-works for the non-working children and other dependants of relief-workers, but may advantageously be established elsewhere throughout the district for the relief generally of incapable poor.

Cooked food was given at the relief-kitchens to all dependants of workers of whatever age and to all starving people unconnected with the work who applied for it. The kitchens were generally under the charge of some official.

Non-working children and other dependants of relief-workers should be relieved by cooked food rather than money

doles. The money would in many cases be stolen or taken forcibly from the weak dependants, and parents to whom the money would be given could not be trusted to expend it on their children.

The jungles of this district contain many edible fruits, leaves and roots.

Of the fruits, the tamarind, mahua, tendu, char, jamun, gusto, awnra, ber, bael, pipal and babul, are the most common.

The leaves eaten as food are pipal, tamarind and koilari. I do not know the names of the edible roots.

Late in 1896 and during the early months of 1897, starving wanderers were to be seen in large numbers all over the district, but especially in the western parts of it. Many of these wanderers were in search of work, but most were in search of food. Had relief measures been adopted earlier, wanderers in such numbers and in such a starved condition would not have been seen.

Many deaths on the relief-works were among wanderers, and the death-rates on some of the works were sensibly affected by such deaths. Most of the wanderers belonged to the district. Some, however, came from Raipur and the bordering States of Kawardha and Rewa. All wanderers were treated alike no matter where they came from. This should be the invariable rule.

The diet scale of the Code provided for poor-houses and kitchens is, as compared with the authorized jail diet of the Provinces, deficient in albuminates, vegetables and salts.

With the addition of 4 ozs. of vegetables and a fixed quantity, say 60 grains, of condiments, it is sufficient as a subsistence diet for people who do little or no work.

The death-rate of the district (ratio of deaths per thousand of the population) for the five years, period 1891—1895, preceding the famine, was as follows:—

1891	25·65
1892	39·17
1893	23·93
1894	28·37
1895	26·45

The mean death-rate of the five years preceding 1891 was 29·32.

In 1896 and 1897 the death-rate was 47·54 and 90·24 respectively.

The death-rates from 1891—1897 from each of the several causes registered were as follows:—

Ratio of Mortality per 1,000 of population.

Year.	Cholera.	Small-pox.	Fever.	Dysentery and Diarrhœa.	Injuries.	All other causes.
1891	1·03	0·08	19·26	1·01	0·40	3·79
1892	8·34	0·40	24·00	1·23	0·44	4·98
1893	0·05	0·45	17·21	0·95	0·40	4·87
1894	0·28	0·03	21·79	0·89	0·56	4·82
1895	0·49	0.21	20·32	0·91	0 48	4·04
1896	10·99	0·83	27·57	1·61	0 67	5·87
1897	8·69	0·64	62·40	8·12	0·67	9·74

It will be seen from the above statement that the mortality from cholera was very high in 1892, 1896 and 1897, and very slight in 1891, 1893, 1894 and 1895.

In 1892, however, though cholera was very prevalent and the mortality caused by it high, still crops were good, rice was selling cheap and the people suffered no ill effects from under-feeding.

Deducting the mortality caused by cholera, the mortality in excess of the normal rate during 1896 and 1897 was due to scarcity of food or the effects of such scarcity.

During the years 1896 and 1897 the spread of cholera was greatly facilitated by a limited and much polluted water-supply.

Dysentery and diarrhœa caused a very high mortality during the past year, and the prevalence of these diseases was due to insufficient and unwholesome food. The death-rate in the district during the past year from these diseases was 8·12 as against 1·61 of the previous year and ·91 of 1895.

Of the 105,121 deaths registered during the year, 59,753 occurred among males and 4,536 among females.

The mortality was higher among children and aged people than among adults.

A good many more lives might have been saved if better clothing and better hutting accommodation had been provided at the relief-camps, poor-houses and kitchens. The hutting accommodation of many of the relief-works was defective, and the workers and followers exposed to rain, cold and damp as a consequence.

For a time the poor-houses were greatly overcrowded.

The water-supply at the poor-houses was fairly well protected against pollution, but the protection of that on the different relief-works caused a great deal of difficulty owing to the number of tanks in the vicinity of the works.

Hospital Assistants were not available in sufficient numbers for all the relief-works.

Vaccinators who had previously been Dispensary Compounders were employed on several of the works in distributing medicine and attending to the sick.

An adequate supply of medicines and medical comforts was provided for the use of the sick in the poor-houses and the relief works.

During the famine a great deal of trouble and delay was experienced in drawing the pay of Hospital Assistants lent for famine duty from the Military Department. According to the orders issued on the subject, Military Hospital Assistants could only draw their pay, travelling and other allowances through the Regiments to which they had been attached before they were placed on famine duty. Several of the Military Hospital Assistants employed in this district on famine duty belonged to regiments on active service, and the consequence was that for months they drew no pay or allowance whatever. Arrangements should be made so that Military Hospital Assistants placed on famine duty could draw their pay and allowances in the district where employed and through the officers under whom they are serving.

(*President.*)—You are in medical charge of Bilaspur?—Yes.

Were you in charge during the whole time the famine lasted?—Yes.

How long have you been in the district?—Nine years.

You know the whole district?—Pretty well.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—When did you first notice any signs of falling off in the condition of the people?—About September 1896.

Did they seem in need of relief at that time?—Yes.

Had you many emaciated people coming to the dispensary?—I noticed many people wandering about.

In your district?—Yes.

What class of people?—Agricultural labourers out of employ.

Did they seem to be running down fast?—Yes, they did.

I see the deaths in your district began to be very numerous in the month of May. What was the cause of the increase during 1897?—Privation.

Directly or indirectly?—Directly I should think.

Did you see any deaths from starvation, or to want of food?—The want of food was the common cause.

Were there so-called famine diseases prevalent?—Yes.

And were deaths numerous?—Yes.

Was there any epidemic disease in your district?—Yes, cholera.

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When did it begin?—In 1896 and continued into 1897. In September 1896 it commenced to die out, but held on during the cold weather and did not absolutely leave the district. It broke out in March 1897.

Did it break out on relief works?—Yes.

Had you large relief works?—Yes.

How many thousands might there have been on the bigger works?—I think up to 5,000.

Were the works much concentrated?—They were pretty general in different parts of the district.

Do you think the appearance of epidemic disease was due to overcrowding?—No.

Was it prevailing among the villages?—Yes.

And not more amongst the workers?—No.

What was the general condition of the people on works?—The general condition of the people was fairly good, that is, of those at work, but their followers and dependants were emaciated.

On works?—Yes.

Where did they live?—Huts and shelters of different kinds were provided.

Was there sufficiency of shelter?—No, and the huts were not waterproof during the rains.

You would not expect that in shelters run up in a hurry and moved from place to place, would you?—No.

Were you relieved of your station duties and able to go about the district?—An assistant was sent to the district.

Did he travel about?—Yes, he did most of the district. This was his special work. I had quite enough work at head-quarters, in the jail and poor-house.

You had a poor-house at head-quarters, had you?—Yes, and there were four in the district.

In the one you had charge of how many people were there?—It ran up to about 4,000 in August.

Had you the entire management of it?—Yes, in all medical and sanitary matters.

What was the death-rate in the poor-house?—I have not got the figures.

Can you say approximately what the total number of deaths was?—2,000.

What did people mostly die of?—Dysentery, debility and diarrhœa.

What were the causes of their diseases, do you think?—Privation.

Were the people in an emaciated condition when they came to the poor-house?—Yes, they were in a very bad condition.

Did the people come of their own accord or were they brought by the police?—Both, of their own accord and carried in.

What was the diet? I suppose you had a free hand?—Pretty nearly all were treated as hospital cases and given milk, sago, etc.

Had many advanced to such a stage that good nursing was ineffectual?—Yes, they were hopeless when they came in.

Had you enough medical assistance?—No, there was not enough for the whole district. We had to employ vaccinators and compounders; there were not enough qualified Hospital Assistants.

Had you anything to do with the selection of people for gratuitous relief in villages?—No.

Were they mostly selected by medical officers?—I don't think so. I think the Relief Officers themselves did that.

How about blankets and bedding, were they poorly off?—Yes, relief workers and their followers suffered very badly in the rains for want of blankets.

Did their health suffer?—Yes.

You say the poor-house diet, described in the Famine Code, is not sufficient. In what respect?—There should be more fresh vegetables in the diet, also more condiments.

That is the only defect. In other respects do you think it is enough?—Yes, for people who do merely nominal work.

Have you watched the effect of the B diet?—I cannot say that I have, except generally, not particularly.

Did you notice the condition and progress of the people at intervals?—Yes.

Did they seem to fall off?—I think the people actually working kept in good condition.

If a man came in poor condition would he pick up under B or D ration?—I should think he would.

(*President.*)—Under D?—No, it is too small.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—What would you suggest as regards this D ration apart from the vegetables, if a man were doing any work?—I should increase the rice and dal.

To what extent? You have not studied the question of the D wage perhaps?—Not specially.

You say in your notes on Chapter VII that in each of the rations you would prescribe 4 ozs. of fresh vegetables and 60 grains of condiments. With this addition no further change is required?—Not for people doing no work.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Where would the vegetables be bought?—That is the difficulty.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Are they not to be had in the district?—Very little.

(*President.*)—Would you raise the wage that was given on works to enable them to get extras?—I have not thought out whether it would be necessary.

You have expressed your opinion as to the ration at page 116 of your note. Well, as to the full ration, what opportunities had you of studying it? You saw the men working?—Yes, it seemed to me good enough, but I think vegetables were wanting and condiments are not definitely stated.

You think they should have the power of getting vegetables?—Yes, if possible.

You mean you would raise the wage in order to have more vegetables and more condiments?—Yes.

At the same time you cannot say that they seemed to suffer in any way?—No.

Generally speaking they seemed in good health on the works?—Yes.

Then this is rather theoretical, about the vegetables?—Yes.

As regards the minimum ration, you were thinking of the poor-house?—Yes.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—You say in paragraph 7 that there was difficulty in poor-houses in the dieting and nursing of the sick. You suggest European nurses might be got. Do you think that would be possible?—Of course that is difficult. I was only suggesting that they might be got for large poor-houses.

Had you much *cancrum oris*?—Yes.

Did it spread?—Yes.

Had you means of spreading out your poor-house?—Yes, it was extended.

You had means of segregating cases of that sort?—Yes.

You say some light work was exacted from the people in the poor-house?—Yes.

You said just now that you considered the poor-house diet sufficient only if they did no work?—The work done was merely nominal.

Was there a sufficient number of kitchens connected with the works?—Yes, I think so.

Did the children come there?—Yes.

Was there objection raised by parents to taking their children there?—No, I don't think so.

Was there heavy mortality amongst the young children?—Not on the works.

Did the children in the kitchens seem well nourished?—Well, they required a good deal of hospital diet.

You say on page 117 that parents to whom the money was given could not be trusted to expend it on their children. Do you think they starved their children?—I have seen them treat their children very badly in many cases. They often offered them for sale, and dragged them as if they were logs of wood.

(*President.*)—Were they in a state of acute privation themselves?—Yes.

At other times, when not in a state of acute privation, do you think that parents would sooner starve their children than themselves?—I think they treat their children remarkably well at other times.

You compared the diet scale of the Code with the jail ration. Do you think the diet should be raised to the jail diet?—Yes.

You say on page 117 that the mortality was higher among young children and aged people than among adults. Were they at a disadvantage as compared with adults. Could nothing have been done to reduce this mortality?—Nothing, unless it had been done earlier.

You attribute this to some extent to the lateness?—Yes.

(*Dr. Richardson*).—For a time the poor-houses were greatly overcrowded. Did you deal with that yourself?—Yes.

There would be no difficulty about that, would there?—No. Numbers came in for a time very rapidly.

(*President.*)—According to the statement in the early part of your note the high mortality commenced at the beginning of 1896. The whole year the mortality was very high. You make it 47·54. Was that high rate in any way due to privation?—In May and June 1896 there was a very heavy cholera mortality.

Do you think people in that year suffered from privation or from unhealthiness of the season?—There was the failure of harvests in 1896.

Were many people asking for relief in that year? Was there an increase of beggars?— I noticed particularly about September that there was a large number of beggars. It was very marked.

(*Mr. Holderness*).—Did the rains fail at that time?—Yes.

(*President*).—What was the first thing done in the way of relief?—Poor-houses were started by the Municipality in the head-quarter town and in some other of the larger towns of the district; they were more or less private.

Did many people go to the poor-houses?—Yes.

When were they taken over by Government?—I think in January 1897. I am not sure of the exact date.

You say on page 2 that many petty cultivators of the non-proprietary class have been permanently injured and have left their villages, and many of them will not speedily recover without help. Did that result from the late famine?—Yes, villages have been deserted and houses have tumbled down. These results I have seen and also heard of from natives.

You are in favour of village works as opposed to distant large works. Do you think that would prevent people being driven away in this way?—Yes, houses would not be forsaken and tumble down.

With reference to what you say in your written note, what sort of people were these officers-in-charge?—At the beginning they were mostly Naib-Tahsildars.

They didn't have sufficient authority you think?—No, afterwards the men employed were of lower grades than at first.

You think that legal powers are necessary to enable relief officers or district authorities to send persons found begging and wanderers without any means of support, and persons who, being able, refuse to work at the relief works, to poor-houses and detain them there. Why do you think that?—Because sometimes it was found that you could not get them to come to poor-houses and sometimes they would leave the poor-house and run away.

If it were given out that people could be forcibly detained in the poor-house, would it not make people still more averse to the idea of going into them? It would become a sort of jail?—Yes.

With reference to what you say in your note about the state of things in 1896 and early months of 1897, are you of opinion that there was a case for providing relief works early in 1896?—Yes.

Do you think that when the rice crop of 1895-96 failed it ought to have been followed by relief works?—Yes.

Do you know if that was ever mooted or discussed in the district?—It was thought of.

About what time of the year?—I think test works were opened, but I am not sure of the exact date.

Was it early in 1896?—I think about September.

When the crop of 1895-96 failed, was there any discussion then as to the question of whether relief would be necessary?—I don't remember.

As to your remark about the predominance of deaths among males, can you explain this in any way?—No, I cannot. I think it is not peculiar to this year.

Do you think it is an explanation that men's deaths are reported more frequently than women's?—I don't know.

Do you think the returns of deaths are generally fairly accurate or not?—I think they are fairly accurate as to numbers, but not as to cause of death.

Do you think in a famine year they would be as accurate as usual?—I think more so, because there was more attention paid to them.

On the other hand if people died on roads or in jungles the village chowkidar might not report such cases?—Great stress was laid on the reporting of deaths accurately.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—With regard to the registration of starvation deaths in April 1897, it is stated that the Civil Surgeon returned 35 deaths from starvation, how did you arrive at the deaths?—They were sent in to us by the Police.

Were they verified?—Not by me.

You took them simply as returned?—Yes.

Afterwards was any attempt made to verify them?—Yes.

Through whom?—Through the Police, by the District Magistrate.

Were any instructions sent by you to the Police as to how they should diagnose a starvation death?—No.

Had they any special instructions, do you know?—They had instructions to make full enquiries and not to return the causes rashly.

They had to specify that the man actually died of hunger?—Yes.

You say Hospital Assistants were not available throughout. Were the Hospital Assistants you had always satisfactory?—Most of them did very well.

Could the Hospital Assistants be trusted to pick out able-bodied men from others?—At first we had very good men, but these were recalled and men fresh from school sent.

When was that?—In August or September.

Up to that time could the Hospital Assistants separate the able-bodied?—Yes, I think so.

You say wanderers were seen especially in the western parts of the district. Was that part of the district most affected?—Yes.

What was the cause?—The crop was worse.

There was distress throughout the district, was there not?—Yes, but that was the worst part of it.

You say gratuitous relief was given through the medium of kitchens where residence was not a condition of relief. When were kitchens started?—I think late.

Do you think they should have been started earlier?—Yes.

What makes you think that gratuitous relief had better be given in grain instead of in money?—I have been told by natives that there was difficulty in procuring grain in many villages.

Did you see relief kitchens on works?—Yes.

Were they well managed?—Yes.

Does your criticism of the poor-house diet apply to these kitchens also?—Yes, they had the same diet.

You think there should have been vegetables also?—Yes.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—With reference to your remarks regarding bedding and blankets, were not clothes and blankets distributed by the Charitable Relief Fund?—Yes, but not sufficient, and they came late.

You received a large grant?—Yes.

Up to 1894 the rice-crop had been fairly good?—Yes.

1895 was the first year when there was considerable failure?—Yes.

Are the people of the district so poor that a single failure of the crops would render relief works necessary?—I think they had disposed of their reserve stocks of grain.

Mr. A. D. Younghusband.

MR. A. D. YOUNGHUSBAND, Commissioner, Chhattisgarh Division, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

12th Mar. 1898.

(A.)—DEPARTURES FROM THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES FAMINE CODE, WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES DURING THE RECENT FAMINE.

. The one material departure has been in respect of the conduct of relief-works. The issue of Public Works Department General Order No. C-498, dated the 26th December 1896, introduced arrangements in the case of all large works different from those contemplated in the Code. Perhaps the most important innovation consisted in the transfer of duties and responsibilities from the Deputy Commissioner to the Executive Engineer and his Sub-Divisional Officer. These two officers are not even named in Chapter VI of the Code, while under the General Order referred to, they are held responsible for practically every detail connected with the work, the only mention of the Deputy Commissioner being in respect of the one or two matters in which he is to be consulted by the Sub-Divisional Officer. The "Officer in charge" under the Code is an officer appointed by the Deputy Commissioner, at his discretion, from either the Revenue or the Public Works Department, and subordinate to him alone in the conduct of all the duties for which he is held responsible. Under the General Order he is selected from the Revenue Department, "a Naib-Tahsildar or officer of similar standing placed at the disposal of the Public Works Department, and posted by the Divisional Engineer to the Sub-Divisional Officer, under whose direct orders he will be."

2. Reading the General Order by itself, it might appear as if the Deputy Commissioner were to a great extent ignored in connection with relief-works under the Public Works Department. But this was never intended, nor has it been the case in practice. In Revenue Department letter No. C-74—95, dated the 15th January 1897, it was expressly laid down that this transfer of works to the Public Works Department "was not intended to relieve Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners of responsibility with regard to the general conduct of famine relief operations in their districts." The principle was emphasized that "in each district it is the Deputy Commissioner who is primarily responsible for the adequacy and efficiency of all arrangements for famine relief." The letter in question further expressly enjoined the regular and frequent inspection of relief works by Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, and their covenanted Assistants, and specified the particular points to which their attention might most usefully be directed. Subsequent orders have authorized inspections being made by other selected subordinates of the Deputy Commissioner, but none of his subordinates have been allowed to give orders on the works, or to interfere otherwise than by inspection and report.

3. These arrangements have unquestionably been a great improvement on the procedure indicated in the Code. With a few charges in a compact district, there may be advantages in having them under the Deputy Commissioner. But under the conditions which eventually prevailed, such a system must in my opinion have infallibly broken down. Moreover, there is a clear waste of power in not utilizing to the full the organization of the Public Works Department. In these provinces, unfortunately, our superior Public Works Department establishment is extremely limited. With an Executive Engineer for each district, or at least for each important district, the arrangements would doubtlessly have worked even more satisfactorily than they have done. Personally, as a District Officer in one of the smaller districts (Narsingpur), at the time the change of system was introduced, I found that the transfer of charge of the works which had been organized by myself, to an Executive Engineer not on the spot, whose duties extended over a number of other districts, more particularly in the uncertainty which then prevailed as to the Deputy Commissioner's precise *locus standi*, was in the first instance attended with a distinct loss of efficiency. But further experience has convinced me that the arrangements then introduced were the right ones, and indeed the only practicable ones.

4. In finally codifying these arrangements, I am of opinion that prominence should be given to the responsibility and authority of the District Officer, on the lines of para. 130 of the Report of the Famine Commission of 1878. The Sub-Divisional Officer should be instructed not merely to consult the Deputy Commissioner, but to take his orders, on matters relating to the task and wage of the people employed on the works; and such orders should *prima facie* be accepted as final, subject to any reference which the Executive Engineer may think it necessary to make to higher authority. This is no more than has been the actual practice at least in this Division. Such questions as the opening and closing of works, the introduction of piece-work and the like, have ordinarily to be referred for the orders of the Chief Commissioner; but it is the Deputy Commissioner, rather than the Executive Engineer, who has throughout been regarded as the responsible local authority on such points.

5. Another very important departure from Code principles in the General Order referred to was in the classification of relief workers. Of the four classes A, B, C and D laid down in the Code, only classes B and D were retained, with a special superior class of persons employed in more responsible duties than the ordinary workers. This re-classification appears to have worked in every way satisfactorily. It is a great improvement on the old Code classification in the matter of simplicity, which is of the first importance. It will doubtless be adhered to, with perhaps further modifications in the same direction.

6. So far we had adhered to the general principles of task-work as set forth in Article 57 *et seq.* of the Famine Code. But at a later stage various forms of piece-work not contemplated by the Code were introduced. In this Division a form of piece-work under contractors, in direct violation of the terms of Article 42 of the Code, was very generally introduced, and proved most successful. Full details regarding it will doubtless be given by the Public Works Department witnesses. Its main features were that the contractor was bound down to pay the individual workers at fixed rates, that, side by side with the piece-work, ample task-work was provided for the weakly, all comers being freely admitted to such task-work until drafted to piece-work after medical examination, and that kitchens for dependents were in all cases established. Subject to these precautions the system was found to be adapted to the most distressed parts of the country, and to the acutest stages of distress. My own opinion is that this is on the whole the most satisfactory form of relief work of which I have had experience, and that it is worthy of general adoption in any future famine.

7. In the matter of dependents on works, the experiment was tried of abolishing cash payments and substituting for them a system of free meals in kitchens. This is what I recommend for the future, a kitchen being established on each work, which should be open not only to the children and dependents of workers, but to wanderers and other persons arriving at the work in obvious need of food, thus serving the purpose of a relief centre. Persons who are merely reduced in condition should be retained and fed at the kitchen until fit to be put on the work, while others should be drafted away by the Civil Relief Officer, with whom the officer in charge should always be in touch.

8. In the carrying out of local works under Civil agency three distinct systems have been tried in this Division. The first, which on the whole appears to have been found most successful, was a system of piece work pure and simple, under which each worker was paid at fixed rates for the amount of work actually done by him, as determined by the rough process of measurement locally adopted. The interests of the weakly were protected under this system by the institution of an infirm gang, the members of which, after being passed by the Relief Officer were paid daily wages irrespective of the amount of work done.

This was a purely local system, which was put in force on a number of works before any general orders on the subject had been issued. The second was an adaptation of the gang and task system prescribed for works under the Public Works Department. It was found inapplicable to any local works but those on which constant supervision was possible. Under the third system the work was given on a quasi-contract to the village headman, who was bound to employ none but local unskilled labour.

9. In addition to these forms of relief work directly undertaken by Government, much work was carried out by the indirect means of famine loans, granted free of interest, a considerable abatement of principal being at the same time allowed, conditionally on the money being expended in affording relief to the distressed population on such terms as the Deputy Commissioner might dictate. These loans were freely taken, particularly in the Raipur District, where the expenditure amounted to some 2½ lakhs. The conditions were somewhat generally expressed, and in the first instance some latitude was allowed to the recipients as to the manner of carrying them out. But later it proved necessary to provide in more express terms for the unrestricted employment of persons of inferior physique, and in particular to insist on the same arrangement of infirm gangs as had been made on the Government local works Apart from this, the method of pay-

ment was generally on the piece-work system described as in force on Civil Agency works. The money on the whole was properly utilized, and afforded much relief. But very close supervision was necessary to secure this end.

10. Relief centres are an institution for which the Code does not specifically provide, of which some use was made in this Division. With the development of village relief and of kitchens and with the fuller realization by the police of the duties imposed upon them under the Code, the necessity for these institutions disappeared and they were gradually closed. There was a distinct tendency for them to become unmanageably large; and, although I am not aware of any cases in which they actually became centres of epidemic disease, there was always a fear of this occurring. They tended in fact to become miniature poor-houses, without any of the organization or supervision of a poor-house. It was not found practicable to exact work at any of these places. I am strongly of opinion that the organization of village relief and of children's kitchens ought to take a very early place in the history of the administration of a famine. Every relief work ought to have its kitchen open to the relief of outsiders, as well as of dependents of workers. And every police post should have a kitchen attached to it, unless there is a kitchen independently established in the immediate neighbourhood. With these arrangements the need for relief centres should disappear. Wanderers arriving at kitchens other than relief work kitchens, should not be allowed to remain there, but should be at once removed by the police, and passed on from one post to another, until they reach their destination, if they have one, or if they are wandering aimlessly, until they reach the nearest relief work or poor-house, as the case may be. I have never had experience of a case of resistance to police action of this nature, and I question the practical necessity or desirability of legislation on the point. The only practical effect, as it seems to me, of giving the police legal powers in this connection would be to encourage them to bring the wanderer before a Magistrate, and the crowding of Magistrates' Courts by accused paupers is one of the evils which during the famine we have had to tax our ingenuity to avoid.

11. In regard to the details of poor-house management it has been impossible to adhere exactly to the rules laid down in Appendix IV of the Code. The Code appears to contemplate poor-houses of very much smaller dimensions than we have found it necessary to maintain. Rule 5, for example, would seem to indicate that a number of inmates in excess of 400 is regarded as exceptional. In the Bilaspur poor-house at one time the numbers actually touched 4,000. This was an altogether exceptional state of things, and should never have been reached if systematic arrangements for drafting could have been perfected at an earlier stage. This matter will be referred to in further detail under the next head. One respect in which it was universally found impracticable to adhere literally to the provisions of the rules was as to the employment of pauper establishment. It proved generally impossible to get satisfactory service out of such an establishment. Paid labour was found to be both more efficient and more economical. The paupers fit for service on the establishment were, generally speaking, fit for labour on relief works, and it was found to be the best plan to send them there. I have recommended a number of minor amendments of the rules, among which may be mentioned the incorporation in them of the Chief Commissioner's detailed orders regarding protection against fire and the order for provision of blankets.

12. I think the above are the only points on which there have been any departures worth mentioning from the principles of the Code, or even from its detailed provisions.

(B).—DEGREE OF SUCCESS WHICH HAS ATTENDED THE MEASURES ADOPTED CONSIDERED PRIMARILY WITH REGARD TO THE RELIEF OF DISTRESS AND THE SAVING OF LIFE AND SECONDARILY WITH REGARD TO ECONOMY.

13. Experience in this Division has gone to indicate the general correctness of the estimate suggested by the late Commission in 1879, that the number of persons on relief in the worst months of a famine ought not to exceed 15 per cent. of the population of the affected tract. The worst month in Chhattisgarh was unquestionably that of September 1897. In this month the percentage of persons on relief of all kinds to the population of the area officially recognized as affected was a little over 12. For the Bilaspur District, which was the most seriously distressed, the percentage was a little under 13.

14. It must be admitted that the remarkably rapid development of distress in Chhattisgarh, more particularly in the Bilaspur District, towards the end of the hot weather, had not from the first been altogether foreseen. The Division depends mainly on its rice crop, the cold weather crops being altogether inconsiderable. The failure of the monsoon crops of 1896 resulted indeed in immediate and general distress, but of the full effects of this failure there was no indication until about the end of April and May, when the resources of the people appeared to collapse with a suddenness which had scarcely been anticipated. As soon as the increased gravity of the situation was realized, no time was lost in extending the organization of relief in all directions.

15. As far as practicable every effort was made to enforce the self-acting labour test in the case of all persons capable of labour, women and children as well as men. In the earlier months of the famine, indeed up to the beginning of the rains, the numbers of those on gratuitous relief were small in comparison with those relieved on works. But during the rainy season, when distress was at its worst, developing steadily up to the end of September, conditions were otherwise, and the recipients of gratuitous relief were in a majority. The following are the figures of persons on works and on gratuitous relief respectively on the last Saturday of each month from January 1897 :—

Month.	Numbers on works.	Numbers on gratuitous relief.
January	13,902	2,825
February	49,452	10,871
March	58,637	23,423
April	98,675	37,783
May	109,843	60,250
June	68,017	65,824
July	94,245	106,673
August	76,816	115.239
September	80,066	150,785
October	55,077	106,292
November	550	25,477
December	...	6,403

It will be observed that the numbers relieved on works reached their highest point at the end of May, that they fell very suddenly in June, and, while fluctuating from month to month during the monsoon, never again approached the hot weather maximum. The numbers on gratuitous relief, on the other hand, went on steadily increasing throughout, month after month, up to September, the culminating point of the famine. In October, the approach of an assured harvest, and the consequent rapid fall in prices, greatly eased the situation; and by November the famine was at an end, relief being needed only for those still suffering from the effects of previous privation, the sick, and the orphans.

16. This marked variation in the proportionate numbers of those on relief to whom the labour test was and was not applied at different stages of the famine is mainly due to the variations of season. It would be still more strongly marked if the figures included, on the one hand, those who during the hot weather months were relieved on works carried out by private employers, for the most part with the help of famine loans, and, on the other hand, the cultivators who during the monsoon months received subsistence allowance from the Charitable Fund. In the first place, the advent of the rains greatly circumscribed the opportunities of providing employment for those capable of work. It meant the absolute cessation of all the small local works, consisting of tanks and embankments, whether carried out directly as Government work by Civil agency, or by private employers, with or without the aid of loans. Practically the only form of work which it was possible to keep open

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through the rains was road work, in the form of metal breaking, of excavation, spreading and consolidation of surface material, and, in certain localities, where the soil was favourable, of earthwork.

17. I my note in this connection, with reference to this question of economy, with regard to which, as a secondary consideration, I am called upon to review the measures adopted, that the road work carried out during the rains must have been in many ways far less economical than in the fair season. On this point the professional witnesses will be able to speak with more authority. But I can at least say, from my own observation, that much of the work of surface consolidation as performed by famine labour is of no permanent utility, and will have to be done over again by the ordinary method of rolling. These considerations may to some extent meet the criticism that the large proportion of gratuitous relief which was given during the rains, as compared with relief on works, was an economical mistake.

18. Secondly, it is to be observed that the advent of the rains, and the opening of the agricultural season, naturally attracted back to their fields the members of the cultivating classes who till then had been earning a subsistence on the relief works. It was a prominent and consistent feature of our policy to encourage this tendency by every possible means. What we most of all desired was to see as large a proportion as possible of the normal area sown, so as to ensure that, given favourable climatic conditions, the coming harvest should be a full one, and in this we succeeded beyond our hopes. To this end a very large expenditure was incurred by Government in *takavi* advances, and by the Charitable Fund in gifts of seed to those who had not the means of borrowing. Throughout the season wages and rates on relief works were carefully watched and regulated with a special view to preventing these works from becoming so popular as to attract labour which would otherwise have been bestowed on the fields.

19. But the subsistence under such circumstances of the poorest cultivators is a problem for the satisfactory solution of which it does not appear that provision has yet been made, either in the Code or in any existing orders. Much was done by means of *khawai* or gifts of subsistence money from the Charitable Fund; but this did not fully meet the requirements of the case. The funds for this purpose were necessarily limited, and it was moreover impossible for the distributing officer to get hold of all deserving cases at the time the distributions were made. Many of the agriculturists who stuck to field labour rather than go to relief-works, deteriorated in condition, and eventually came on the gratuitous relief lists.

20. The grant of *advances* for subsistence has never been attempted here; indeed, I question whether such advances could legally be given under the Agriculturists' Loans Act. And in any case this would not meet the requirements of the large class of poor agriculturists who in a year of famine are reduced to a condition in which they have no credit left. I am inclined to doubt whether it is really practicable to do anything better than give gratuitous relief to persons of this class during the cultivating season, as soon as they begin to show signs of privation.

21. I regard it as one of the minor incidental advantages of the system of piece-work which was in force on many of the works under the Public Works Department in this Division, and which on other grounds I am disposed to advocate, that it facilitates the earning by cultivators of something in the way of subsistence money while not neglecting the interests of their fields. On some at least of the works in which this system was in force it was found that cultivators in the neighbourhood of the work would come to it in their spare time to earn a little money, which they could do with a degree of independence altogether denied to them under the old system of daily task and daily wage. The amount of relief thus afforded to the cultivators in the immediate neighbourhood of a work is of course infinitesimal when compared with the needs of the whole distressed area. But the point is referred to for what it may be worth.

22. Ordinary agricultural operations, weeding and the like, suffered to a considerable extent owing to the small tenants and their families being for the most part too reduced in condition to undertake much physical exertion, and owing also to their inability to entertain hired labour, of which there should have been no lack had there been the means of paying for it. Efforts were made by several of the relief officers to give assistance in this direction, and a certain amount of expenditure was incurred in the employment of labour to weed the fields. A suggestion was made that famine loans might with advantage be freely given for this purpose, but it does not appear to have been largely acted upon. No separate returns were furnished of the relief given in this form; but it may be taken that a certain number of those returned as on gratuitous relief were in fact employed from time to time on operations of this nature.

23. Apart, however, from these considerations, it appears to me that the rigidity with which the labour test is enforced must vary to some extent with the different stages of famine. Here, in the earlier stages, the Code rule limiting gratuitous relief to persons altogether incapable of work, and having nobody able and bound to support them, was very strictly insisted upon. At a later stage a concession was made in favour of persons showing temporary signs of privation, who might be admitted to the list for a period not exceeding 15 days at a time. Finally, all these rules were superseded, and it was laid down that emaciated appearance was to be the one test of admissibility to gratuitous relief. In the stage of distress at which we had by that time arrived, I am of opinion that this last order was absolutely necessary for the purpose of saving life. Large numbers of persons were found to be unwilling to leave their homes in order to go on relief works. Such persons, being able-bodied, were of course denied relief in any form, so long as they refused to submit to the labour test. But in the more advanced stages of the famine the result of persistent refusal to submit to this test was that many of these persons were reduced to a condition in which they were practically incapable of work, and were at the same time in imminent danger of starving to death. How is a relief officer to deal with such cases? I think there can be only one answer, that he is bound to do whatever is necessary for the saving of life; and it was on this principle that our officers were instructed to act. On the other hand cases were not unknown of persons who, having the means of subsistence, deliberately starved themselves before the relief officer's visit, with the object of qualifying themselves by their appearance for admission to the gratuitous relief list. In such cases, when detected, relief was properly refused. But there were doubtless cases which escaped detection.

24. It is possible that the numbers on gratuitous relief might never have reached quite the proportion they did if our arrangements for village relief could have been perfected at an earlier stage than they were. As the result of my experience I have recommended the amendment of the Famine Code in the direction of making the organization both of village relief and of children's kitchens from the very outset of a famine not merely permissive, as at present, but imperative. But it must be remembered in this connection that such organization is scarcely possible without very large and special additions to the ordinary District staff. This is particularly the case in the Central Provinces, where our administrative areas are enormous in proportion to the strength of the controlling staff. Our districts are not in ordinary times territorially sub-divided into Assistants' charges; and our Assistant and Extra-Assistant Commissioners are heavily burdened with Civil Judicial work, and miscellaneous duties of all kinds. Our Revenue Inspectors are not, as a class, men who can be trusted to carry out the duties imposed upon them as "Circle Inspectors" under the Code without the detailed supervision of either European or exceptionally good native officials. Our regular machinery for detailed village inspection is thus of a most imperfect character; and, unless this can be very largely and promptly reinforced from outside, some delay in starting a really systematic arrangement of village relief seems inevitable. We did in fact by degrees receive very liberal reinforcements; and our eventual superior relief staff was a strong one, made up not only of the regular district establishments, but of Assistant Commissioners specially deputed in excess of the regulation number of officers from other Departments, and Military officers on special duty. All of these officers worked splendidly, and I believe that our eventual organization left little to be desired. With a larger special staff from the outset this might have been perfected at an earlier date; but in view of the requirements of other parts, which at the time were more pressing than ours, it was doubtless impracticable to do more for us than was done. At the same time should it ever fall to my lot in future to report the imminence of famine in my Division, I should not hestitate to press, as a measure alike of efficiency and of economy, for the deputation from the very outset of the fullest possible famine staff.

25. Mortality in this Division (except in the Sambalpur District) has been lamentably high. The following are the death-rates in the Raipur and Bilaspur districts for each of

the worst months, the rate taken being in each case *per mille per annum*:—

		Raipur.	Bilaspur.
May	1897 . . .	90·00	81·48
June	„ . . .	108·60	130·80
July	„ . . .	85·92	119·04
August	„ . . .	117·24	150·89
September	„ . . .	102 00	134 40
October	„ . . .	98·64	125·76
November	„ . . .	73·36	78·72

A very large number of deaths in May and June were due to an exceptionally severe epidemic of cholera, while during the rainy season malarial fever appears to have been unusually prevalent. That this was the case in the Raipur District was clearly shown in the course of a special enquiry held on the point. In Bilaspur, while the cause of death in the large majority of cases was entered at the time as "fever," it was suggested by the officers holding the special enquiry that many of these deaths may have been really due to bowel diseases resulting from privation or improper nourishment. Of this, however, there appears to be no evidence, and considering the totally different character and appearance of the symptoms in the two classes of disease, I cannot regard such a mistake as probable. I think there is every reason for holding that, altogether apart from the scarcity of food, the entire season was in both districts an extraordinarily unhealthy one. When full allowance has been made for this, the mortality was of course abnormal, but I am not prepared to say that any of it was preventible. To the returns furnished of deaths from starvation I am unable to attach any value. My belief is that deaths which could with strict accuracy be so described were very rare. The death-rates in poor houses were extremely high, owing to the fact that large numbers of persons were admitted who were already in the last stages of disease. The medical officers were allowed a free hand in regard to the dieting of all inmates of poor-houses for whom they considered special diet to be necessary; and this must, in my opinion, be always left to their discretion. I do not consider the regulation poor-house ration to be insufficient for a pauper in normal health, nor would I suggest any alteration in the prescribed scale of diet.

26. I have referred above to our arrangements for village relief. The persons so relieved in this Division belonged mainly to the agricultural classes resident in rural areas. Setting aside those whose incapacity for work was the result of privation, the permanently incapable, without supporters or resources, would in ordinary times subsist on the charity of the village community. But in time of famine such charity must necessarily soon dry up. I consider that village relief, rather than relief in poor-houses, should be the back-bone of the system of gratuitous relief, and that it should, as I have said, be thoroughly organized from the very outset of a famine. I do not think that under this system relief has been too freely granted, and I am of opinion that the precautions laid down in the Code, if carefully applied, sufficiently guard against any such danger, although as I have observed, it may become necessary, as the famine increases in severity, to apply these precautions with less unyielding rigidity than in the first instance.

27. For the gratuitous relief of children, I would establish a system of kitchens within easy reach of every village throughout the affected area, to which the children should come for their meals, returning to their homes. This system was largely adopted here in the later months of the famine, and was found to work very successfully; but it was not universal, and it should, in my opinion, have been adopted earlier. In any future famine I would recommend its adoption *pari passu* with the arrangements for house-to-house relief, from the very outset. With this system fully organized, the village relief list should not include the names of any children.

28. Our village relief was given chiefly in the form of monthly doles of money. But in some parts of the Raipur District where apprehensions were entertained regarding the sufficiency of the food supply, doles of grain were substituted. On the whole I am inclined to regard the money-dole as the simplest and most satisfactory arrangement, where the people have sufficient facilities for purchasing their supplies; but I would leave the question as at present to the discretion of each District Officer.

29. I do not think that kitchens for adults could satisfactorily take the place of this form of relief. While there is no objection to receiving doles of money or uncooked food, I believe that numbers of persons would refuse to accept relief in kitchens, and that the result would be a large increase in the mortality. Holding this view, I would not (if, as I have elsewhere advocated, kitchens on relief works are to take the place of cash payments to dependents) insist on the infirm relative of a relief worker accompanying him as a dependent in place of being relieved at home. I think that a person reduced to a condition which compels him to go on a relief work should not, unless there is good reason to believe that he has other resources, be treated as one "able to support" his aged or infirm relatives.

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30. Undoubtedly, as I have already shown, the successful organization and administration of this form of relief involves, particularly in these Provinces, the regular district establishment being supplemented by a very large special supervising staff, larger perhaps than any other kind of relief. But even if this form of relief were altogether condemned, it seems to me that the special staff would still be necessary for the important duty of constant and detailed inspection, village by village, of every corner of the affected area, and for keeping the District Officer regularly informed of the state of things everywhere. The importance of such an agency for this duty can hardly be over-rated, and I do not think that it should be regarded as maintained solely for the distribution of village relief, or that, if such relief were abolished, it could safely be dispensed with. No use was made in this Division of voluntary agency in the distribution of village relief, nor was there much opportunity of doing so, although in one or two instances missionaries resident in rural areas undertook with great success the charge of Government relief centres and kitchens. Of the Rev. Mr. Lohr, of Bisrampur in the Raipur District, I may add that, had I known as much of him and his methods at an earlier period as I now do, I would have endeavoured to enlist his direct co-operation to a very much larger extent in the official scheme of relief, and I have no doubt that the arrangement would have been most successful.

31. The drafting to works of inmates of poor-houses fit for labour was regularly attended to throughout. Attention was also throughout directed to the drafting of others to their homes for village relief, but the systematic performance of this duty was scarcely possible until the village relief arrangements had been fully organized. At the beginning of the rains the numbers in poor-houses in the Bilaspur District were excessive, and drafting during the rains was attended with special difficulties. Systematic and successful efforts were, however, directed to this matter. I have recommended that special stress should be laid on this duty in the revision of the rules in Appendix IV of the Code.

32. The administration of large relief-works will doubtless be dealt with by witnesses from the Public Works Department in greater detail than it is necessary for me to attempt. I do not think it is possible to fix any definite standard as to the number of such works which should be opened in each sub-division. Everything must depend on the severity of the distress. Our experience was that "a charge" becomes unmanageable when the numbers on it exceed from 5,000 to 6,000, and it was necessary to open many such "charges" in each of the distressed tahsils. A "tahsil" is, I understand, what is meant by the "sub-division" referred to in paragraph 128 of the Famine Commission Report. It may be observed that our tahsils are, on the average, vastly larger in area than for instance the "talukas" of the Bombay Presidency.

33. Great difficulty was experienced in enforcing the prescribed tasks. The mass of the able-bodied workers were content to do a short task and accept the minimum wage; and it was not found practicable to enforce tasks by recourse to fining. These same men, when put on to piece-work, were found to work with a will, and in this way the piece-work system had a distinct advantage from an economical point of view, as well as being less demoralizing. I think that every possible encouragement should be given to able-bodied workers to earn the maximum wage of their class. I do not consider that the minimum (D Class) wage is enough to keep an able-bodied man in really good condition, and I am of opinion that the condition of the able-bodied persons on our works generally deteriorated in consequence of their not receiving more than this. It may be said that even if they earned the B Class wage they would not consume it; indeed, it is said that many persons saved money out of the B Class wage. This was no doubt the case in some instances, but I doubt whether the practice was so universal as some officers appear to have thought. In any case I do not see how this is to be practically guarded against, and I think that the existence of such practices would scarcely justify us in omitting to provide each worker who complies with the prescribed labour conditions with the means of procuring the daily ration estimated as necessary to

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maintain him or her in normal health and strength. And I think that system is to be preferred under which the workers will most readily comply with these conditions, and qualify for the wage enabling them to purchase the full ration. I would at the same time point out that, in so far as money was saved out of wages, it may be presumed to have provided to some extent for subsistence during the cultivating season.

34. Such success as has attended the relief measures adopted in this Division has unquestionably been very largely contributed to by the operations of the Charitable Fund, more particularly in connection with the first and last of the four recognized objects of that fund. As regards the second object, expenditure on orphans has been comparatively trifling, being restricted to provision of a few extra comforts and simple educational facilities for orphans maintained during the famine at the cost of Government. I think that in any future statement of the objects of a similar fund it might with advantage be clearly laid down, that the actual maintenance of orphans while the famine lasts is a legitimate charge on Government rather than on the charitable public. As regards the support of orphans after the famine is over, it was found unnecessary in this Division to ask the Fund for a single rupee for this purpose. Large numbers of our orphans have been adopted by relatives, neighbours, and other co-religionists, while the balance have been taken over by missionary and philanthropic bodies. In all cases suitable guarantees have been exacted, and in none has anything been asked for by way of sudsidy.

35. The third object of the fund, read literally, is practically inapplicable to this part of the country. There are few, if any, persons, I believe, who "will endure any privation rather than take advantage of Government relief." But there are numbers of persons, particularly in towns, who, while not in such a state of destitution as would justify their admission to the Government gratuitous relief lists, are yet very hardly pressed by a rise in prices, and as such deserve consideration at the hands of the charitable public. It was for such persons that a cheap grain shop was opened at Raipur by the local Charitable Fund Committee. I had doubts at first regarding the desirability of this measure, both as being an interference with private trade and also because I feared abuses in connection with its management. But it was found to work very successfuly. It afforded much welcome relief to a number of deserving persons, and I think its effect on the market was good in the way of steadying prices.

36. In connection with the first object, a great deal of very valuable relief was afforded in the provision of clothing and blankets for the destitute poor. But the bulk of the Fund expenditure was on the fourth object, in the provision of seed and cattle for distressed agriculturists. I would certainly recommend, in the formal statement of this object, the omission of the words "when distress is subsiding." The greater part of the expenditure was in fact incurred at a time when distress was increasing, in connection with the monsoon sowings. The gratuitous gifts of seed from the fund proved a most valuable supplement to the Government *takavi* advances, which not only were insufficient to provide all the seed required, but were beyond the reach of the very poorest cultivators who had lost their all; and it was to this latter class that gifts from the Fund were confined. Gifts of subsistence money, locally known as *khawai* were also made from the Fund to indigent cultivators to support them during the period between seed time and harvest, when their presence in their houses to look after their fields was necessary. A number of cattle were bought at the cost of the Fund and stationed in different villages in the charge of the headmen for the use of such needy cultivators as might require them. Further, arrangements are still in progress for the re-settling by Deputy Commissioners in waste villages and the like, by means of grants made to them from the Fund, of cultivators who have lost their land.

37. In connection also with the fourth object, assistance was given from the fund to distressed artizans, such as metal-workers, bangle-makers and the like, by finding a market for their industries. In respect of weavers, the Committee of the fund in Raipur undertook as a voluntary agency on behalf of Government the organization of relief on Code lines.

(C)—ADVICE AS TO THE MEASURES AND METHODS WHICH SEEM LIKELY TO PROVE MOST EFFECTIVE IN FUTURE IN THESE TWO RESPECTS.

38. Much of the ground under this head has already been covered in my preceding remarks, and I will only refer in the briefest possible manner to points already dealt with.

39. As regards preliminary measures, I consider that the preparation of programmes of relief works deserves more detailed attention than it has hitherto received. In this Division a satisfactory comprehensive programme will not be easy to arrive at. Railway feeder roads might no doubt be multiplied almost indefinitely in Chhattisgarh, with great advantage to the trade of the country; but the difficulty would be to provide for their future maintenance. We have already more roads than there is any prospect of being able to maintain properly. Still there are one or two additional roads which are very urgently needed in Chhattisgarh to open up remote parts of the country, or to link up roads which have already been constructed in the Native States; and I think that all such should be entered in our programme to be taken up as relief-works, unless it has been found possible before the next famine to construct them otherwise. I would also lay stress on the importance of every road work being surveyed simultaneously with its inclusion in the programme. The prompt opening of relief works in this famine was a good deal impeded by the absence of surveys. Apart from roads, though there appears to be no scope here for any irrigation on a large scale, it is believed that the Chhattisgarh country lends itself to the construction of connected chains of small irrigation tanks, small impounding reservoirs, and the like; and it has been recommended that an officer should be deputed on special duty to make a detailed survey of the country and draw up a scheme of this nature in readiness to be utilized for relief works in the next famine.

40. When famine is actually imminent, I think the first step should be the opening of a small number of works under the Public Works Department in such localities as may be decided on, for the employment of unskilled labour. If such works are already in existence a more vigorous prosecution of them would no doubt suffice; but such is seldom likely to be the case here. These works should be carried out on ordinary lines, but should be made test works by a careful adjustment of rates, regarding which the Executive Engineer should act in concert with the Deputy Commissioner. Contracts should be so expressed as to provide for the re-organization of the works on famine lines whenever necessary.

41. Simultaneously with this measure, or at latest when the test applied by the Public Works Department has confirmed the apprehensions of serious famine, should be undertaken the preparation of village lists for gratuitous relief, and the selection of sites for children's kitchens. These preliminaries could be started without awaiting the arrival of a special staff; but no time should be lost in applying for the services of such staff, and they should, if possible, be in their places by the time it is necessary to begin making disbursements.

42. By this time it is probable that something in the way of poor-houses will have been started, organized perhaps in the first instance (as was the case here), by private charity. These should as soon as possible be taken over by the authorities, and brought under Code rules.

43. Meanwhile the test works should be gradually developed into relief-works on the piece-work system, the rates for workers as well as for contractors being fixed on a graduated scale according to prices, with the additions of infirm task-work gangs, of kitchens, and of hospitals, and additional works should be opened as required on the same lines.

44. Local works, consisting mainly of field embankments, small irrigation tanks and the like, can in my opinion best be provided for by means of famine loans, the supervision of the relief officers being directed to seeing that unskilled and infirm labour is freely admitted to such works and adequately paid. Works under direct Civil agency should, I think, be exceptional.

45. Wanderers should be temporarily relieved at children's kitchens as well as Public Works Department kitchens. From the former they should be promptly removed by the police, who, like most establishments, will probably need considerable strengthening.

46. Orphans, or, more accurately, deserted children, should not be allowed to live at kitchens, which I do not contemplate as places of residence for anybody. If on investigation no trace of parents or guardians can be found, they should be removed to an orphanage specially established at the nearest poor-house. The objection to sending

all such children to the district head-quarters is that it increases the difficulty, when the famine is over, of tracing their belongings or of getting them adopted.

47. In offering these suggestions, I am contemplating a famine such as we have just gone through in Chhattisgarh, and such as any future famine in Chhattisgarh must almost certainly be, arising immediately out of the failure of the monsoon crops, originating in the cold weather, developing itself through the hot weather, with perhaps a slight temporary check in the event of a really good cold weather crop being reaped, but in any case not attaining its full development until the rains. Many of the measures of relief organized during the fair season would have to be modified in the rains. Local works would be entirely at an end; Public Works Department works would perhaps have to be considerably contracted, and moving about the country would be greatly impeded. Under any circumstances I think that the greater part of our relief during the rains would have to be gratuitous village relief. But if, on the next occasion, under indentical conditions, the measures I have suggested could be promptly and systematically organized from the very first, I think it probable that the extent to which such relief would be necessary might be very sensibly reduced.

(D).—OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS OR OPINIONS THOUGHT LIKELY TO BE USEFUL IN FUTURE FAMINES.

48. I do not think that there is anything which I need add to the foregoing remarks.

(*President.*)—I understand from paragraphs 1 to 4 of your note that you mean that the system introduced by the Public Works Department General Order of 1896 is the right system, but that in the Code the authority of the Deputy Commissioner should be maintained?—Yes, it was maintained here in practice, but I think it would be as well if the practice to be followed were made more clear.

In paragraph 6 you refer to the introduction of piece-work. When was that first introduced into the Division?—To the best of my recollection about the month of June. The system I refer to is Mr. Penny's.

Was that done by Mr. Penny in accordance with orders received from Government in the Public Works Department or after consulting you?—The rules were finally sanctioned in the Public Works Department, but as far as I remember we introduced them under a sort of informal sanction.

What was the motive?—In the first place the various orders that came from the Secretariat. I think the initiative came from there.

The motive was to reduce the number of workers?—Yes. It was rather with reference to the conditions which prevailed in other parts of the Province that the Secretariat were sending out General Orders with the idea of contracting works.

Mr. Penny's system has been well described in a note attached to Mr. Harriott's evidence?—Yes.

You say contractors were employed. Is that an essential part of Mr. Penny's system?—Yes.

Were they old Public Works contractors?—Yes, I believe they were. At first we were not allowed to call them contractors but piece-workers. Gradually we got used to the idea of the contract system.

Were they supposed to be working from benevolent motives, or for a profit?—A profit was distinctly provided for them.

What provision was there for supervising the payment of wages by contractors?—The Public Works Department staff was maintained to look after that. The rival contractors also acted as a check on one another.

When Mr. Penny's piece-work system was introduced, were non-working dependants paid a dole?—The dependants of infirm gangs were either paid or fed throughout. Dependants of persons on piece-work were not provided for at first, but from August they were provided for under the orders of the Chief Commissioner.

With reference to what you say in paragraph 7 of your note, regarding the establishment on works of kitchens for dependants and children, this is right no doubt in the case of children, but is it not doubtful as regards old dependants. Would not many object to it?—I think there might be difficulty, but I don't see how to get over it except by saying they must either go to kitchens or stay in their villages.

But there must be some who would find it difficult to separate from their daughters or sons on the works?— Yes, I admit this is a difficulty.

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What is the system which you describe in paragraph 8 as the first system used under Civil agency?—It is what they call the *dangni* system. It is a simple system of rough measurements.

Is in applicable to earthwork?—Yes.

It is a native indigenous system, is it?—Yes, it is common in village work, and was applied everywhere in Bilaspur.

Was the system you speak of as the third system in the same paragraph much used?—No. It came at rather a late period when most of the work had been started, so that it had very little trial. I don't think it was tried in Bilaspur at all.

Supposing it was decided to have two systems of work, (1) village works in the centres of relief circles, and (2) large public works under the Public Works Department; do you think there would be any difficulty in the Civil officers supervising the village works under the system you mention as the first system?—No, I think it means a good deal of detailed supervision.

Do you think it would be possible to reserve village works for cultivators and weakly people by a system of passes given by relief Circle officers and to refer the able-bodied labouring classes to big works under the Public Works Department?—I think it might be tried. A good deal would depend on the efficiency of the local staff. You would want a very strong superior staff to see that the Circle Inspectors did their duty properly.

You say in paragraph 9, with reference to loans, that later it proved necessary to provide in more express terms for the unrestricted employment of persons of inferior physique. Was it found that persons who took loans did not employ them sufficiently?— Yes.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Did you find it possible in practice to enforce these conditions?—I think some of the officers enforced them very well.

(*President.*)—What were the works for which advances were chiefly taken in the Raipur Division, were they chiefly small tank works?—Almost entirely.

Were these sometimes utilized for irrigation as well as for supplying water to cattle?—Yes, quite as much for irrigation.

They are a valuable protection against famine I should think?—Yes.

You say in paragraph 10 that you are strongly of opinion that the organization of village relief and of children's kitchens ought to take a very early place in the history of the administration of a famine. When was it organized in Raipur and Bilaspur?—I am not very sure about the date of starting village relief, because I only came in April. I think it was in February.

When you talk about village relief, I suppose you mean gratuitous relief?—Yes.

You say, with reference to wanderers, that you have never had experience of resistance to Police action in passing them on to their destination, and you question the practical necessity or desirability of legislation on the point?—Yes, they are quite capable of doing it without legislation.

Was it necessary in practice to actually drive the men along?—No. I believe that in Bilaspur there were cases of people unwilling to go to poor-houses, but it was not necessary to use physical force.

You say in paragraph 13 that experience has gone to indicate the general correctness of the estimate suggested by the late Commission in 1879. Are you sure there should not have been more than 12 per cent. of the population in Chhattisgarh on relief in September?—I am decidedly of that opinion. In September I believe that relief had been extended to everybody who needed it. We had our arrangements complete.

You think the same true of Bilaspur?—I am speaking of the whole Division.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—That does not include persons relieved by the Charitable Relief Fund or loans?—No.

(*President.*)—With reference to paragraph 14 of your note, seeing that there is practically only one crop in the Bilaspur and Raipur districts, and that the crops of 1895-96 were very poor and those of 1896-97 almost a complete failure, should not the rapid development of distress have been foreseen?—It is rather difficult for me to answer that question, as I only arrived in April.

From the table showing the numbers of people on works and on gratuitous relief in paragraph 15 of your evidence, I

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observe that the numbers on works rose very greatly in April and increased again in May, and then fell off in June. I suppose most of this fall was due to the orders issued for the introduction of piece-work?—No, I should not say that. It was due rather to the opening of the cultivating season.

As regards paragraph 19 of your note, how were people selected for the *khawai* allowance?—It was left to the discretion of individual officers. They had a limited amount to distribute, and they gave it to the persons most deserving.

If you adopt the policy of pressing people to leave the works when the cultivating season approaches, I suppose it is necessary to, in some way or other, arrange for their subsistence?—I think so.

You say in paragraph 20 that you are inclined to doubt whether it is really practicable to do anything better than give gratuitous relief to persons of this class during the cultivating season, as soon as they begin to show signs of privation?—Yes, I have not arrived at any more satisfactory conclusion than that, though it is not a very satisfactory one.

Does it not show there is a danger in pressing them to leave the works?—I think it is very easy to overdo the pressure; at the same time I think it would be a great mistake to make relief works so popular as to keep cultivators there and so endanger the success of the next harvest.

You say in paragraph 24 that your Assistant and Extra Assistant Commissioners are heavily burdened with Civil judicial work. Was it not possible to relieve them of that work during the time of famine?—I don't think it was possible to relieve them of it entirely. Civil work did fall largely into arrears.

Could not one or two officers have been selected to do judicial work and so set free the others?—Practically that was done.

What is the pay of Revenue Inspectors as a rule?—From R30 to R40 a month.

You say in paragraph 25 that the entire season was an extraordinarily unhealthy one, and that, when full allowance has been made for this, the mortality was abnormal, but you are not prepared to say that any of it was preventible. Do you think you can say that of Bilaspur for instance?—I have perhaps overstated the case.

You say that to the returns furnished of deaths from starvation you are unable to attach any value. You say also that your belief is that deaths which could with strict accuracy be so described were very rare. What is your idea as to strict accuracy in describing a death from starvation?—The rule laid down was that a person should not be considered as having died from starvation unless he had been without food for a certain number of days.

Was it laid down at the time that enquiries were to be made into supposed deaths from starvation?—Yes, but the enquiries were generally very inadequate, and there were absurdly exaggerated reports.

With reference to paragraph 27 of your note, do you suppose that the children would come alone or be brought by their mothers?—Well, I should think most of them would come alone. They would come in parties.

You mention "easy reach"; how many miles were you thinking of as a maximum?—I should think about three or four miles.

With reference to your paragraph 29, I understand that you would let an aged dependant either have relief in the village or at the works?—Yes.

Do you think it is necessary to abolish cash payments to old dependants at works?—I think it is, on the ground of simplicity.

With reference to paragraph 30, don't you think the special staff of village relief which you mention there ought to consider it a part of their duty to press the able-bodied to go to works?—Yes, certainly

Do you think the exercise of pressure would have a considerable effect?—Yes, I think so.

You say in paragraph 33 that many persons saved money out of the B class wage. I suppose you mean they did it by stinting themselves?—Yes.

You say in paragraph 36 a number of cattle were bought at the cost of the fund and stationed in different villages, in the charge of the headmen, for the use of such needy cultivators as might require them. Did you hear whether they were actually used?—I do not remember any special reports on the point, but I have no doubt that they were.

In the same paragraph you refer to people who have lost their land. Were they numerous?—Yes. I am afraid I cannot give you figures, but certainly a large number of tenants lost their land.

What is your idea in paragraph 40 when you use the words "these works should be made test works by a careful adjustment of rates"?—I think that the rates offered should be something lower than would ordinarily be required by the Public Works Department, but at the same time they must not be made so low as not to be a living wage.

The test-work which you were trying in 1896 and at the beginning of 1897 did not work as a test in the Central Provinces, did it?—I had no practical experience of this. It was before my arrival.

Can you tell us how the labourers have been getting on since the harvest was over?—From all I hear I gather they have earned a certain amount in the harvest and have been living on it since. In some parts they are in want of work again.

I think the Government of the Central Provinces think they should be allowed to increase their ordinary public works in order to provide work?—Yes, I think so.

Has that been done yet?—There is very little money this year. I hope we shall have some increase. Of course there is a great deal of work that requires to be done in finishing up the famine work.

Are you able to say whether debt has much increased among the agricultural population in the course of the famine?—No, I am afraid I cannot. I have no figures.

I see the rice area in 1896-97 fell off very considerably in Raipur and Bilaspur as compared with 1895-96. Was that due to cultivators losing their cattle?—I think I should put that down to deficiency of seed.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—You say in paragraph 6 of your note that side by side with the piece-work ample task-work was provided. Have you any idea of the numbers on the different works. I am speaking of the time when the system was in force?—In the month of July in the Raipur District we had this system in force on 11 road-works. The total number of workers on these 11 roads was 17,480, out of whom 9,392 were working under contractors; they worked on the piece-work system. Side by side with these, on the same 11 roads, were 7,854 persons on task work.

Did these contractors work under Mr. Penny's rules?—Yes.

Were Mr. Penny's "piece-work" rules introduced on all works?—No, they were introduced on these 11 works in Raipur, and on certain works in Bilaspur.

You mean the rules printed in Appendix A, of Mr. G. M. Harriott's printed evidence?—Yes.

Do you think under the schedule referred to in paragraph 4 of Mr. Penny's rules, a man doing B task would earn B wage?—I understand that that is the basis on which this table has been calculated.

Do you think under these rules the labourer earned excessive wages when employed by the contractor?—No, I do not suppose so.

Do you think there was a large proportion of the piece-workers who were unable to earn a subsistence wage?—I believe not.

Do you suppose all those unable to earn a subsistence wage were drafted to task-work?—Yes, that was the intention and that intention was fairly carried out.

Under these circumstances do you suppose the introduction of the contract system tended to draw men from the work?—I think it had that tendency at first.

Why?—Because large numbers of people who had been accustomed to earn subsistence wages without doing a full task, objected to a system under which they were obliged to work harder.

(*President.*)—Did it break up family gangs?—I do not think so.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Do you consider that there is any objection to a man earning an excessive wage under this contract system. Would you put a limit?—No, they should be quite free to earn as much as they can.

Do you consider that a man earning good wages on piece-work will return to the fields and village?—I think so.

You do not think he will remain earning?—Yes, there is a danger, but our rates were so drawn up that there was no chance of their earning excessive wages.

Was the system of "payments-by-result" introduced?—It was tried on a few works in the Bilaspur District, but was immediately abandoned.

Was it considered successful?—No.

The main point was that nobody earned more than D wage?—Yes, I consider it a very severe system. I do not think it is adapted to the state of things prevailing here.

What is your idea of wage. Do you think that on piece-work we should give B wage all round?—B for the B task for able-bodied men and for others D wage.

What do you consider is the "ideal" wage?—I think an able-bodied worker, if he worked fairly, should be able to earn the B wage.

Many of our witnesses said that people might be usefully employed in deepening village tanks in preference to road works. Do you agree with them? Do you think works of that description sufficient? Would it employ them for the whole season?—I think tank work in many ways more useful than road work. It would give work nearer home, but it would scarcely be sufficient to employ the whole population for the whole season.

In the rains would it be possible to work on village tanks?—No; practically impossible.

You must have other works during the rains?—Yes.

You think there is a danger of people not coming to the works if the works are not near the village?—Yes, some danger, but not an insurmountable danger.

You think it is desirable that the wages should be liberal to enable a man to earn something even in his own village?—Yes; but there should be some difference in favour of larger works.

You propose in paragraphs 40 to 44 of your written evidence that on the first appearance of distress we should open a small number of works under the Public Works Department. Would they be road works?—Yes, a certain proportion.

Then labour would be in the first instance drafted to these works?—Yes.

Would you propose opening any work in the villages to begin with?—I would engage private agency in the village, give takavi advances as much as possible, and so on; and as distress spreads special famine "loan" works.

I understand your first relief work would be road-work?—Yes road-works would be the first measure in the absence of any other programme ready.

And you would allow the man to earn whatever he can?—Yes.

These road-works would be like test works, on which you would offer a particular rate?—Yes.

That would not be test work under the Code?—No, but the *test* would consist in the rate being lower than offered in ordinary times.

You mean the test would be whether a certain number of people would come to the works on a particular rate?—Yes.

Was there any complaint made by a Railway Company that they could not get labourers?—I know of only one complaint made in connection with the Dhamtari Railway line; it was suggested that our relief works interfered with their labour. It was, however, on investigation found to be absolutely unfounded.

Would not the liberal wages on the piece-work offered by you form a ground for complaint by the Railway administration?—I think not unless the rates were excessive when compared with the price of food grains.

I think you said able-bodied men doing fair work under Mr. Penny's rules could earn B wage. Is the D wage sufficient for a man on work?—I understand D wage is the grain equivalent of the non-worker's ration. It is, I should say, insufficient for persons doing work.

Have you any idea how far you will raise it?—No, I have not gone carefully into the question.

Dr. Poynder, in his evidence, says that there was a great want of small coins on the works. Can you explain that?—I gather Dr. Poynder chiefly refers to the period before I was in charge. It is notorious that everywhere in the early days of the famine there was great difficulty in getting small coins.

What about the complaint made by Dr. Poynder about the badness of grain supplied?—That too has reference to the period before I joined. We, eventually, arranged with a contractor to supply us grain, and I believe the contract system worked very well. There was very little complaint after that.

Judging from your experience would you make similar arrangements in future?—Yes. We found them useful in many ways. The contractors were encouraged to make enquiries as to the state of local markets and to arrange and keep a sufficient supply for local consumption. The contract system is very useful.

(*President.*)—What inducement did you offer the contractor; simply the business he did, or any other?—Inducement in various ways. I did not myself arrange the details.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Had you separate contractors for each work or one for the whole district?—Very few; most of the works were undertaken by one large contractor.

Was any control exercised over the rates he charged?—He was bound to sell at fixed minimum rates.

Dr. Poynder complained about hutting arrangements. Did you improve them?—We did our best, but the Public Works Department works increased rapidly, and there was difficulty in getting materials.

I think the huts are required for the rains?—Yes.

And during the hot weather?—Well in places where there are trees and good shade the people do not require huts. But such conditions were exceptional here.

Dr. Poynder complained that the amount of wage was not enough to purchase the quantity of grain it was supposed to represent?—No, I do not think so; that was not my experience.

The wage was closely adjusted?—Yes; that was the intention.

Who did this adjusting business?—The variations of the grain rates were carefully watched by the officer in charge, and he reported it to the Deputy Commissioner. Under the rules the sanction of the Commissioner was necessary for any alteration, but towards the end of the famine the Deputy Commissioner was authorized to adjust the wages in anticipation of sanction.

Was the distress as great in Bilaspur as in Raipur?—Decidedly greater in Bilaspur.

How is that at Raipur you had over 74,000 persons on the works while at Bilaspur only 34,000?—It is a very difficult question to answer, but I think it is owing to, first, a mistake on the part of the Public Works Department subordinates in Bilaspur in interpreting the order which limits to 5,000 the numbers on each work; secondly, I think in Bilaspur enough works were not opened.

How long did the error regarding the 5,000 limit continue?—The Chief Commissioner says in his report it was not in operation for a long time—evidence was afterwards forthcoming which satisfied the Chief Commissioner that it had existed from early in April.

How is it that more works were opened at Raipur?—In Raipur on one single work we had 16,000 people; this itself showed that there was urgent need for more work.

I see it is stated that the needs of Bilaspur were not pressed either by you or the Deputy Commissioner. Can you explain that?—The Deputy Commissioner had from time to time asked for more works for Bilaspur, and his applications had been supported by the Commissioner. When I came here in April I was informed that things in Raipur were worse than in Bilaspur; and of this there was every indication. The numbers of workers were increasing daily, and the works were overcrowded. Every effort was being made to extend the operations of the Public Works Department, but the Public Works Department had their hands full. They were doing their utmost for Raipur, and it was impossible for them to give more attention to Bilaspur: I admit that I did not realize that things were as bad at Bilaspur as they really were; but I should say as far as Raipur was concerned, it required all the attention that was given to it.

When were the last works actually opened in Bilaspur?—Not till August.

Do you agree with the remarks of the Deputy Commissioner, that when the works were actually opened, the people had been reduced in condition and were not fit to work?—I do not go so far; their bad condition must be attributed to other causes also, which contributed to their bad condition.

Was not the Public Works Department very badly off for officers?—Yes.

Mr. A. D. Younghusband.

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Do you think that could have been remedied if British and Native Military officers had been employed?—It was done to a certain extent. Two Military officers were sent to the Public Works Department; we had also one special party of Native infantry.

If measures of this kind had been taken earlier could not more works have been opened?—Possibly.

With your experience of the Military officers would you recommend their being largely used to supplement the Public Works Department staff whenever necessary?—Yes. In spite of their lack of professional knowledge they proved most useful in supervising the works.

You lay stress on the necessity of organizing village relief and increasing village staff. Under identical circumstances in what month would you start the work?—Not later than January.

I suppose you would considerably increase the Inspecting staff?—Yes.

And relief officers?—Yes.

It was not done in this case?—Not sufficiently early.

I notice that Bilaspur had a small staff of Assistant Commissioners and relief officers. Did the Deputy Commissioner ask for more?—Yes.

Did he get them?—Not immediately. In fact everybody regarded Raipur as more distressed than Bilaspur.

In paragraph 22 of your note you speak of slight work in the shape of weeding, etc. Would that employ labour to any great extent?—Yes; I think a good deal might be done in that line.

You recommend that that sort of work should be done by means of "loans"?—Yes, famine loans or Land Improvement loans.

You found large numbers of persons unwilling to go to relief works?—Yes; pressure to a certain extent had to be put on them.

Your paragraph 27, as regards kitchens, were not your kitchens worked on the rules drawn up at the Pachmari Conference—I mean Mr. Fuller's rules?—Yes; they worked very successfully. The peculiar features of these rules were—that the children were all told to return to their homes after they were fed, and no child residing two miles away from the kitchen was given gratuitous relief.

Do you approve of this two-mile limit?—Yes, I would like to have kitchens every two miles.

You would open these kitchens at once?—Yes.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—If a person has been long unable to obtain food and when he gets food, inevitably dies, being unable to assimilate it; would you return him as having died of starvation?—No, I do not consider that he comes within the strict definition as given in the orders; if he actually receives relief and dies after the relief has been administered to him, he will not be shown as having died of "starvation."

Even if relief is of no use?—That is how I understand the rule. The orders were that persons who died after receiving relief should not be shown as having died of starvation (*vide* Revenue Department Circular letter No. 2960, dated 17th June 1897).

(*Mr. Bose*).—Do you approve of the employment of contractors in the execution of relief works?—Yes, under certain conditions.

Do you think they could be trusted to deal fairly with the workers?—Yes; experience has shown us that they could be trusted under the supervision of the Public Works Department.

After the failure of crops, do you think the people of the Chhattisgarh Division had less resisting power than the people of the Nursinghpur Division?—I should think so.

In your recommendation in paragraph 21, regarding piece-work, are you referring to small works near the village?—No, I was referring to road-works.

At a distance or near the village?—In that paragraph I am only referring to villages near the works.

You mean as far as possible near the village?—My remarks in that paragraph only apply to a certain limited number of villages.

At the Commissioner's Court, Jabalpur.

THIRTY-THIRD DAY.

Monday, the 14th March 1898.

PRESENT:

SIR J. B. LYALL, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I. (PRESIDENT).

SURGEON-COLONEL J. RICHARDSON.
MR. T. W. HOLDERNESS, C.S.I.
MR. T. HIGHAM, C.I.E.

RAI BAHADUR B. K. BOSE, C.I.E.
MR. J. B. FULLER, C.I.E., (*Temporary Member for the Central Provinces.*)
MR. H. J. MCINTOSH, *Secretary.*

MR. H. SHARP, Principal, Jabalpur College, Famine Relief Officer first in Jubalpur and later in Mandla, called in and examined.

Mr. H. Sharp.

14th Mar. 1898.

I put in a written statement of evidence and written answers to the Commission's questions.

(A)—Departures from the Principles of the Central Provinces Famine Code which have occurred in the Central Provinces during the recent famine.

Generally speaking, the broad principles of the Code were adhered to. But a new line was struck out in the multiplication of small works under District management, and the addition to many of these works of relief-centres. The workers were generally employed on tank-digging or path-improvement; the wage was fixed; the task, where one was exacted, was light. The relief-centres were intended primarily for wanderers, and the dole was made in money; though in the larger centres food was given to the children and the sick. In Mandla not only wanderers but residents of neighbouring villages were likewise received, and it was thought, in the earlier months of the famine, that these centres would to some extent take the place of house-to-house relief.

In the recognized methods of relief, the following departures from the Code occurred:—

Public Works Charges.—The Code was materially adhered to. For a time "piece-work" was introduced, with a view to instituting a more searching test and inducing agriculturists to return home for the sowing. The plan was tried only for a short time; and I believe that in the richer tracts it was beneficial in helping to keep off the works some persons who were not really in want.

Kitchens.—Adults were generally permitted to feed in village kitchens, as well as children; this was beneficial, as it was sometimes difficult for emaciated persons to purchase and cook their own food. Details, such as the instructions for making a kitchen enclosure, (C. P. Famine Code, Appendix V, Rule 1) could not always be carried out. The

forms used, too, were simpler than those given in Appendix V; and they worked well.

Village-Relief.—This was worked as under the Code; but during the monsoon the mukaddams were not responsible for the dole reaching the recipients. It was considered safer to make full monthly payments.

Other slight departures.—Section 123 of the Code was extended, so that Police officers might disburse aid to the urgently distressed through kotwars, even if the distressed were not wanderers. But this form of relief was not largely used.

Section 27 could not be carried out, as the mukaddams of the wilder tracts were incapable of performing the duties therein prescribed.

(B)—Degree of success which has attended the measures adopted considered primarily with regard to the relief of distress and the saving of life and secondarily with regard to economy.

(In writing on this point I intend my remarks to apply to the Mandla District, where I had the best opportunities of observing the efficacy of relief; and I hesitate to deal with the subject from the point of view of economy, as this is a matter which did not come within my ken. The Mandla District is exceptional, in that large tracts of it are in a very backward state, and the percentage of Gonds and Baigas in the population is considerable.)

Public Works Relief Charges.—Though this form of relief was liberally worked, the people made only a very limited use of it. Unaccustomed as they are to organized labour, shy, suspicious and unwilling to leave their homes, the majority put their trust on the supply of jungle produce, and remained in their villages till they were fit only for gratuitous relief. I have found many cases of men who lived within sight and a mile's walk of works, yet who preferred to sit idle till they were incapacitated for labour, even of the lightest kind. With few exceptions, none came to the works to live in huts from distances exceeding 6 or 7 miles. Those who resided in their homes, and walked daily to and from the works, were few in number, and came only from very short distances.

Small works under District management proved useful to immediately surrounding villages. But even here, large sections of the population neglected to avail themselves of the proffered aid; and the numbers employed were usually far below those sanctioned at the respective centres. The relief-centres proved useful to a few wanderers; but often these people refused even gratuitous relief, when coupled with the condition of residence in any one fixed place. Regarded as a partial substitute for village and kitchen-relief, they are totally inadequate, and merely productive of a sense of false security. The people did not flock on to them, preferring to die in their homes; and frequently those who did resort to them found inefficient alleviation of their sufferings. It was impossible to make adequate arrangements, as the officer-in-charge had most of his time taken up with the superintendence of the small work. Two of the combined works and relief-centres in my circle were attacked with cholera during the hot weather and the early rains; but the mortality on this score was not heavy. During the later monsoon months the mortality on such works and centres as were situated in deep and malarious jungles, and where the water is highly charged with saline matter, was very heavy, bowel complaints being the commonest of the immediate causes of death. Kitchens proved highly beneficial, especially in the frequent cases where parents starved their children, and likewise in localities where it was not easy for persons disabled by disease or starvation, to purchase and cook their own food. Moreover, a proper use of the relief afforded was ensured; the people could not, as in the case of a money-dole, spend all on a few expensive meals or on drink. On the other hand the villages are so far apart, that it was sometimes difficult for inhabitants of the outlying villages of a kitchen circle to come to the kitchen. Dislike to cooked food was evinced at first, but soon overcome.

Village-relief seems to be the only form of relief which it is possible to administer widely over a large part of this district; and I believe that it should here be made the backbone of famine relief. Cases, of course, occurred, where the money was mis-spent; and, in some limited areas, food may have been difficult to obtain; but this was only in localities where it would be practically impossible for Government to arrange for giving the dole in the form of grain, or even for importing on any large scale.

Generally speaking the relief arrangements made were unable to check a very high mortality at the commencement of the rains. The death-rate had previously been comparatively low; the people had supported themselves upon jungle produce; and it was expected that those really in want would crowd upon the relief-works and centres. Village-relief had not been widely developed; nor had kitchens, other than those attached to the large relief-work camps, been opened. When the rains burst the jungle produce quickly degenerated; and the deepening of the distress was so sudden and universal, that, even had the two last mentioned forms of relief been in full swing, the death-rate, though it might have been enormously reduced, could not, in my opinion, have been brought within anything like normal limits. As it was, a great extension of kitchen and village-relief was ordered in July; and, though it came too late to check the high mortality of August, its efficacy is clearly shown in the falling death-rates of the succeeding months.

(C)— Advice as to the measures and methods of working which seem likely to prove most effective in future in these two respects.

(Again, my remarks must be taken as applying to the Mandla District; and I express no opinion upon the second consideration.)

The difficulty to be faced in this district is the following: the inhabitants, even in years of plenty, are in the habit of wandering off into the jungles to collect jungle-produce as a means of eking out their food-stocks during the hot weather. The result was, that they failed to take advantage of the means of relief then afforded, and at the commencement of the monsoon, found themselves in their villages, without their usual stores of millets and rice, at a time of year when the jungle-produce, taken as a staple food, becomes rank poison, and when dysentery and malarial fever had to be combated by constitutions already impaired by low living. The habits of the people themselves thus render it difficult to administer any form of relief up to the moment when relief is only too likely to arrive too late, when it is most difficult to administer, and when the numbers of those who require it suddenly rise so rapidly, that even a large staff of officers would be incapable of bringing all deserving cases at once upon the rolls. A system of relief should, therefore, be arranged and carried out during the hot weather, with a view to the two following points:—

(*a*) Relief of all kinds must be early advertised, and the people taught to depend, not upon the precarious supply of jungle-produce, but upon the forms of aid offered by Government.

(*b*) The systems of gratuitous relief must be in full swing before the advent of the rains and the Revenue Officers thoroughly acquainted with their duties; for, during the recent famine, it was amply proved that the exigencies of distress are so immense during the latter part of June, July and early August, that there is no time to organise new systems of relief.

To effect these two objects, it is necessary that relief-works under the Public Works, and on a small scale, under the District authorities, should be early instituted to give the able-bodied and the more enterprising a chance of earning their own livelihood. Such works will also act, to a limited degree, as a test. Relief centres for wanderers might be useful at the small district works. But it would be dangerous to regard the drawing powers of such centres as constituting a test; and fatal to consider this form of relief as in any way a substitute for village and kitchen relief. A system of petty village works might, if it could be arranged, be found efficacious. But, notwithstanding the honesty of the Gond, such a system would probably be found unworkable; in the uplands, the mukaddams, who would be an important factor in any such scheme, are illiterate and incapable; and the sub-divisions of the district are too extensive to permit of sufficiently frequent inspection. The back-bone of relief, throughout the whole period of famine, would have to be kitchens and village relief. These should be in working order even before the full need for them is apparent. In case of the failure of the kharif harvest, kitchens should be started at Police-houses and other suitable places not later than the ensuing February. These kitchens would gradually grow in size and number. At the same period, Inspectors' circles should be sub-divided into not less than three divisions each; and Inspectors and patwaris given clearly to understand that certain percentages (fixed from time to time by the Deputy Commissioner on the evidence of

Mr. H. Sharp.

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his own observations and the reports of his Relief Officers) should by certain periods be upon the village rolls. Trusty and willing *harkara* should be early sought out and placed at the disposal of the Inspectors (great difficulty was experienced owing to the want of such men in the wilder parts of the district, and hence supp'ies of money, etc., were precarious) and every other detail should be most carefully arranged, so that, at the advent of the rains, the large numbers of those suddenly thrown into distress may be quickly placed in receipt of relief.

(*D*) *Other recommendations or opinions thought likely to be useful in future famines.*

(1) It might be found useful to formulate some of the results of recent experience in distributing private charitable funds. For instance, if aid towards kharif sowings is to be given to agriculturists, the fact should be advertised well beforehand. Otherwise, brokendown tenants become hopeless, and, if of an enterprising nature, go to works, situated, perhaps, outside the district. They hear of the distribution not at all, or too late, when the bulk of the money has been expended and the best time for sowing is past. This gave great trouble during the recent famine; and, in my opinion, it would be well to commence the distribution on the relief works, get the agriculturists back to their homes, and then commence the distribution by Patwari circles for those who have not gone on to works. For purposes of giving clothes, too, large supplies of cloth and suitable blankets should be sent out from head-quarters to convenient centres in the district, as soon as the rains begin to cease. This will greatly facilitate the work of relief officers during the commencement of the cold weather. I think that a few such hints, if drawn up, would be of use to District Committees in any future famine

(2) The system of drafting emaciated or weakly people off the works during the rains to their homes on village-relief, proved most beneficial. The works thus became centres for the distribution of such relief; and those who had tried to help themselves were placed in receipt of the most acceptable form of aid. This form of relief should, in my opinion, be more clearly insisted on.

(3) The plan of a large central orphanage at head-quarters seemed to me objectionable. Orphans should be taken to works, Police kitchens or other centres near their old homes, there is then more chance of their relatives and caste-fellows claiming them as the distress begins to subside.

Answers to Special questions.

*60. Any number of tank-works and small field embankment works could be usefully undertaken.

86. I do not consider piece-work suitable in all cases; but it might be usefully employed under the following conditions:—

(i) It should be used chiefly (perhaps solely) during the early stages of distress.

(ii) It should (from an early stage or even from the very beginning) be combined with a task-work system for those less capable of strenuous labour.

(iii) The kind of work exacted should be such as the people can do (*e.g.*, some piece workers could earn a decent wage at digging, who could earn not even a livelihood at metal-breaking).

87. It seems to me that the objections raised by the Commission do not take account of the fact that the piece-worker might support his family at home. In backward districts, however, I think that, except in the initial stages of distress, piece-work on a large scale is a dangerous experiment.

88. They would be drafted into task-work gangs, which I consider a necessary adjunct of piece-work. Frequent inspections would be necessary to re-adjust the classification.

91. I believe it will be fairly distributed. I had few complaints of this nature; and they generally proved to be unfounded.

93. I believe there would be no difficulty, provided the conditions noted above were observed.

94 and 95. I think that Mr. Higham's proposals both as to classification and rate are excellent.

97. I think Mr. Higham's proposal good, except that it would be fairer to draw a distinction between boys and girls from 12 to 16.

101. In some cases I have seen considerable bodies of workers on daily wage, and I did not find them enfeebled in health.

103. Yes three days' continuous and immediately previous attendance would be a fair condition.

116. The Executive Engineer would be responsible for the organisation and management of the gangs, etc.; the Collector (Deputy Commissioner) for the general supervision of the camp, the hospital, the kitchen, the food-supply, &c. But I doubt if the line can be precisely drawn (*e. g.*, the Collector should be able to interfere in the classification of workers, supposing both piece-work and task-work to be in vogue).

117. Generally speaking, no.

128. (i) Yes; great difficulty.

(ii) Here they varied a good deal, sometimes they were most docile, and some, especially the children, worked with a will. More often they were stubborn (not rebellious) and inert, driving officers-in-charge to desperation by their disorderly and lazy habits.

150. Some were capable of light work; but they would rather die in their homes than go a few miles to get it. A few, too, who had capable relatives, were enrolled by mistake; but generally the aboriginal tribes aid their relatives so far as they can.

152. By no means; numbers of men were on gratuitous relief, who, with work often near their doors, had fallen into emaciation owing to their own inactivity.

154. Emphatically, no.

157. Yes; many applied for it who were fully capable of work.

158. Not in all cases. The precaution taken was simply that those who showed signs of emaciation or were physically incapable of work were to be brought on the rolls. Some of the Inspectors interpreted this too widely. I corrected it as far as possible, by moving rapidly from circle to circle and adjusting the standard to uniformity.

159. If by officers "in the superior grades" are meant Famine Relief Officers, I think not; it is not essential to see the whole of an Inspector's work; but samples of it must frequently be seen; and surprise inspections are easy and effective.

160. No.

164, 165 and 166. Theoretically, kitchens are better; and the sentimental difficulty is easily overcome. Practically, it would be impossible to arrange for a sufficient number of kitchens.

168. It was given in their homes.

169. No; a few cases of dishonesty came under my notice; but, on the whole, I was agreeably impressed with the honesty of the petty officials.

192. Volountary unofficial agency was almost totally unavailable.

195. At those stages, kitchens should take a more prominent part in the scheme of relief; but it would be unwise to let them wholly take the place of village-relief.

196. To all who arrived in an obvious state of want.

197. No; the kitchens were worked much to the credit of of the officials and private persons in charge I believe there was but little waste or misapplication of food. Police and Forest officials, zamindars and other private persons were all utilised.

198. Yes; cooked food should always be given, except in the case of children at the breast. Parents cannot generally be trusted.

217. In a densely wooded country like Mandla, it matters little if the Government forests are thrown open or not. This supply of jungle produce and fodder out of the malguzari and free forests is more than sufficient.

219. In the hot weather the blossom of the mahua, and tendu and other fruits. During the rains the forest-produce, if eaten in large quantity, is very dangerous. It consists chiefly of "chikora," or wild indigo, yams and other roots, and the fruit of the sal tree. At the beginning of the cold weather "ber" fruit is largely eaten and stored.

251 and 252. The state of the case is correctly indicated in question 252. Cholera accounted for many deaths. The mortality, too, among people who could not have been suffering from want, was very heavy: and in many villages I had complaints of abnormal epidemics of fever and diarrhœa (especially during the rains) which carried off rich and poor alike.

* The numbers refer to the quetions drawn up by the Commission.

253. Yes; they caused terrible mortality, and were doubtless primarily, though not wholly, due to unwholesome diet. Very often the first indication that a person was really in want was the first symptom of an incurable disease arising from this cause.

254. On the whole it was sufficient.

274. They eat two meals—one at mid-day, of "pej," a thin porridge of millet and water; the other in the evening of boiled rice. Wheat is but little used among the aboriginal tribes. Millet is the staple food.

278 and 279. They had one meal in the kitchens of "khichri" of rice and dal with salt, turmeric and chili added. It was generally approved of, and considered ample and wholesome. Special diet was given to very emaciated children. A few people complained that the food was indigestible and asked for "pej". But they were the exception.

(*The President*).—You were deputed as Famine Relief Officer during the Famine?—Yes, I worked at first at Jubbulpore, and then I was in charge of the relief works at Mandla.

When did you first take up this work?—On the 23rd February 1897 at Jubbulpore, where I was in charge of the poor-house at Sehora, and then at Mandla from the beginning of April.

When did you first see signs of distress in Jubbulpore?—It is very hard to give a precise date. I heard that the monsoon of 1895 had failed. I noticed signs in 1896.

What were the signs you observed in 1896?—I occasionally saw thin people begging about in the station.

In the Spring?—No, Autumn.

You did not observe anything before that?—Nothing that I could put down to general famine.

What work did you do in Jubbulpore?—I was Famine Relief Officer for half of the Sehora Tahsil.

What month?—In March or end of February. The famine was severe and the measures efficient.

What measures?—There was a large poor-house at Sehora, one large local work under the management of the District Officer, and there was the relief centre. The light work attached to the village relief largely attracted people.

What was the system in force in the relief centres?—They were open to wandering classes from Rewa and Panna, but other people were allowed if emaciated, and were gradually drafted off if fit.

You mean that these relief centres were poor-houses?—Yes.

Other relief was going on in the villages?—Yes.

What charge had you at Mandla?—A large part of the Bamhni, Ramnagar, and Bichia circles, with the exception of a small strip in the north.

What class of people were the Circle Inspectors?—Officers of the Revenue Department.

I suppose their number had been increased?—Not at the time I took charge, but 3 additional Inspectors were sanctioned afterwards at the close of July.

How many villages had each Inspector?—About 190.

Did they have a thorough knowledge of their villages?—No.

Did the number on gratuitous relief increase?—Yes, enormously.

Were any kitchens established?—Yes, in July.

In every village?—No. We had one central kitchen for five or six villages; but children from other villlages used to come to it.

Did distance prevent them from coming?—Yes, the floods prevented them from coming from distances, but whenever possible they came from different villages.

Were the doles tor children stopped?—Yes, in those villages in which the kitchens were opened, but not in others.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Was the village dole only for children?—Yes.

(*President.*)—In what month were the kitchens for children established?—End of July or beginning of August, with the exception of the Public Works Department kitchens.

What was the object of the establishment of kitchens in preference to doles?—Mothers could not be trusted with money to feed their children.

Was it also to cut down the numbers?—No, I am not at all aware that that was one of the objects.

Have you any authority for saying that the mothers did not feed their children?—I have frequently come across fat mothers with thin children.

Very emaciated?—Yes.

To what class did these mothers belong?—I observed that among all classes. I had mostly to do with the aborigines.

Does not a child show signs of emaciation quicker than an adult?—Yes, but that cannot be said in the case of families in which every adult member was fat except the children. There is no special reason why the child should show signs first.

Was the dole given to the people direct?—No, it was given to the mukaddams for distribution, but this arrangement was afterwards altered, and it was paid through the village Inspectors.

Was it paid weekly?—No, fortnightly.

Were there any complaints?—It was difficult to get them to speak because the mukaddams were generally present.

You say in your written note that "the people could not, as in the case of money-doles, spend all on a few expensive meals or drinks," I suppose you are referring to the Gond and Baigas?—Yes.

Did you notice any such instances?—Yes.

Were any particular measures taken to overcome the dislike for cooked food?—No, it was not found necessary; there were no complaints except in the beginning.

I suppose the cooking was done by the Gonds and Baigas?—No, a Brahmin always did the cooking.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—Did not the Gonds refuse to take the food cooked by Brahmins?—It was only in the beginning, but once they started eating there were no objections raised after.

(*President.*)—Many low castes refuse to eat food cooked by Brahmins?—Yes; but nobody came to me with any objections to eat food cooked by Brahmins. I think the objection was to eat in public.

Did they object to uncooked grain?—No.

You say when the rains burst jungle produce quickly degenerated, and further on you say jungle produce taken as staple food becomes rank poison, to what jungle produce do you refer?—The *Chikora-Casia* root was largely used by the people; but it is a strong purgative, and so during the rains this root becomes very unwholesome.

Do you see any reason why in respect of adults grain doles instead of cooked food should not be given in the form of kitchen relief?—It is impossible to work on any general rule. There is no objection; the people can easily cook their own food; but the only difficulty is that the people will, in exceptional cases I should say, sell the grain to purchase liquor.

With regard to distribution of seed grain, you say that the broken-down tenants should be informed of the aid that we are going to give in time otherwise the enterprising lot go out of the district; did this give you trouble in the recent famine?—Many tenants, cultivators, etc., who were on the works and villages went away. I had to go round to collect them and give them the money; this distribution could have been more efficiently done if they had been made aware of the aid they would get, and if they were at some place where they could be easily found.

What was the seed-grain?—Rice, kodon and kutki.

You say the system of drafting emaciated or weakly people off the works during the rains to their homes on village relief proved most beneficial, how was this drafting arranged?—The Inspector or myself went round the works, we picked out the weakly persons, and to all those who wished to go home we paid a considerable amount of money, clothes, etc., and sent them to their villages. I gave a note to the patwari entitling them to village-relief, and took a receipt from some responsible village officer. The money paid by me was credited to the village relief fund.

Was there any case in which these weakly persons refused to leave the relief works?—Yes. I hesitated to send them in such cases.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—The clothes were from the Charitable Fund?—Yes.

(*President.*)—There was need of clothes on the works?—Yes.

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What was the nature of shelter provided on the works?—It was hutting of grass and leaves of the kind they are always accustomed to.

Mud walls or grass?—Grass, mudded outside.

Water-tight?—Generally water-tight.

It was generally thought that in the Central Provinces it was necessary to stop relief works during the rains. Are you of that opinion?—I would not stop works altogether, but cut them down. The main relief in a district like Mandla should be gratuitous relief.

Is the climate harmful to people out on the works then during rains?—Well, they are out in the rains all their lives working; the climate, accommodation and comfort on the works was the same as in their homes. The emaciated would suffer in the rain and not the others.

In your written evidence under D (3), orphans being claimed by relatives and caste fellows, do you refer to any particular caste?—No.

In your answer to question 97 you say that Mr. Higham's proposal is good, except that it would be fairer to draw a distinction between boys and girls from 12 to 16. You think a boy at 12 requires more food than a girl of that age?—I should say so from what I saw on the works.

Your answer to question No. 101, have you studied the question of sufficiency of wages?—No, the best of my time was spent in the villages.

In answer to the first part of question No. 128 (i), you say, "Yes, great difficulty." One of the witnesses, a Chief Engineer, who has had large experience in the Central Provinces, said it was very easy to get the Gonds to come to the works?—Well, I cannot say so; that was not my experience.

Do you know if they come to labour on the ordinary Public Works Department works?—They would come to the ordinary Public Works Department works if at a short distance; I do not think they would go long distances.

Don't you think on the ordinary Public Works Department works there was less discipline as regards sanitary arrangements, etc?—Yes, they are averse to discipline and fault-finding.

What interpretation did you give to the meaning of the provision of the Code, which says "incapables who have no relatives willing and able to support them could be admitted to gratuitous relief?"—I suppose this rule was not strictly enforced. It made no difference whether the children had parents, uncles or aunts, and whether the adults had fathers, brothers or relatives. It was known that all were equally distressed, and the incapables received relief without any difficulty. If the relative himself was known to be in poor circumstances the incapables were admitted to gratuitous relief.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—With regard to the President's question as to the interpretation of the meaning of the Code about incapables having relatives, etc., to support them; as a matter of fact was any attention paid to that rule?—Absolutely none.

(*President.*)—In answer to question No. 160, regarding "social or caste stigma," I think your answer, "No," refers only to Gonds and Baigas and other low castes?—Yes.

As a matter of fact did any persons of good position, good caste, come for relief?—I cannot say persons of "good position" but persons of "good castes" did come; we had many Brahmins and others of good castes on our village relief and even in our kitchens. The Brahmins were generally the cooks and his relatives and others did not show any disinclination to come and eat the food cooked by him.

In answer to question No. 254 you say, "On the whole sufficient."?—According to my experience of the poor-houses I think the rations given were sufficient. I think they got a great deal more than what they were ordinarily getting.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Was there a poor-house at Mandla?—Yes.

Conducted by Government?—Yes.

In addition to the one conducted by the Church Mission Society?—I am aware that the Church Mission Society had one at Mandla; they had one also in the District.

(*Mr. Fuller*).—Were they poor-houses or kitchens?—The Missionaries called them "kitchens."

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Had they an enclosure?—No.

Were they intended for the benefit of the Native Christians?—No; anybody who chose to come.

Did they overlap Government relief?—It may have been so in certain cases, but not as a rule.

Were the missionaries of opinion that Government relief was not sufficient?—Those were started in the early times of the famine, and one Missionary told me that the people they had were mostly wanderers and picked up before they could reach Mandla.

How many had they in their poor-houses?—About 1,000.

You say "relief centres" are totally inadequate and productive of false security—why?—It made officers think that village relief was not wanted; it was supposed to be a test and mistaken for village-relief.

You say Circle Inspectors were not increased till July—why?—I do not know the reason.

I think you said village-relief did not commence till the beginning of August, did the death-rate show any increase meantime?—Yes.

Have you any figures?—The figures were not sent to me. Between April and July the death-rate was high—

In June it was	10·52
,, July ,,	16 3
,, August ,,	16·6

but this high rate was apparently owing to cholera.

Was it in consequence of this high rate that gratuitous relief was expanded?—Yes.

The increase of death-rate was from the commencement of the rains?—Yes.

Do you think by opening village relief earlier this could have been remedied?—Yes.

Then you would require more Inspectors?—Yes.

Were the charges opened by the Public Works Department sufficient?—No; they did not bring people within reasonable distance of the works.

Do you think more works would have been useful?—No.

Why?—On account of the character of the people.

I find from the returns that the number of workers rose and then dropped suddenly. Can you explain this?—One charge was closed, that accounted for a part of the fall. I myself sent off many people who were cultivators, and then the piece-work was introduced, which further contributed to another fall in the numbers.

When was piece-work introduced?—In June.

Was it a success?—It reduced the physical condition of the people, they could not earn enough.

Is that your personal experience?—Yes.

Was the task heavy?—The work was unsuited to them, but I think there was a good deal of laziness.

I see from the July monthly report, that the Civil Surgeon complained to the Deputy Commissioner of the over-strictness of the Public Works Department?—Yes. A good many people who wanted to work on task-gangs were made to work on piece-work. But I do not think there was any hardship in it, as I noticed that even when task-work was thrown open, the increase was not numerous.

Had you any works executed by malguzars?—None through Government, but loan works were numerous.

You think it is possible to increase these works?—Yes.

In the form of famine relief?—I believe so.

Would it have to be worked by the Civil Department?—Yes.

Had you any difficulty in the matter of supply of grain?—No; there was always a grain shop at the works.

Was any grain imported by Government?—No, not in my part.

When cash doles were given were they able to purchase grain?—Yes. In all cases there was a difficulty; they had to go to the nearest market village.

Was the payment made direct to the recipients?—Yes.

Was separate allowance given to the mothers?—There was a maximum given to the families.

How much did a woman get?—It varied considerably according to the price of grain, as much as Rs. 2-8 sometimes.

Strictly adjusted according to the price of grain?—I think so; it was based on the report I would send in, as to the prevailing price of grain.

Was the children's ration sufficient?—Yes, they got what we considered to be sufficient for them, but they were generally included in the family arrangement, that is to say the family got what was thought to be sufficient for that family.

In the case of large families would that be sufficient?—Yes.

Did you find the dole sufficient when given to persons in good health?—Yes.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—You can divide the District into two parts—the hills and plains?—Yes.

The hills are inhabited by the aborigines and the plains by Hindus and aborigines?—Yes.

Was reluctance to come to relief shown by both these classes or only by the aborigines?—I should say the aborigines, mostly the Gonds.

What sort of works had you in the hilly part?—Road works and metal breaking.

Does this attract them?—No.

In answer to question No. 60, you say any number of small works could be usefully undertaken?—Yes.

Were many such works undertaken in the hilly districts?—Yes.

Did they like such works?—I can't say, the maximum number of workers was never reached.

Would they not have taken kindly to tank works?—Yes, they would take kindly to any work if not looked after.

If higher rates were given and they were kindly treated would it attract them?—Not to long distances.

The Conservator of Forests, Berars, said they would take kindly to work if higher rates are offered?—I think if the works are close they would attract, but not otherwise. I found men starving half a mile from the works through sheer laziness.

If you have officers who are kind and sympathetic would they come?—Certainly, people who knew them would be able to influence them to come.

How do you account for their reluctance and rooted dislike to discipline?—They are a shy class, who have not come in contact with Europeans; they are to a great extent in ordinary times independent, living as they do on forest produce which they gather and store in ordinary years.

Don't they trade in it?—I don't know, I never saw them trade in jungle produce.

Do these forest people take to cultivation?—Yes.

If the reserved forests were thrown open to them would it afford them relief?—During the hot weather it would.

Are these hilly people in ordinary years in great poverty?—I should say so. They have no capital of any kind.

Is not one single failure enough to bring distress among them?—Yes.

They have no resources to fall back upon?—No, even if they had a bumper crop they would be too lazy to gather it; they would allow it to stand rather then harvest it.

Did you come across any dead bodies?—Yes, a few; but not those I could ascribe to famine or starvation.

Among the hill-tribes?—I came across one case among them, where a body had been dug up by animals.

Where did these tribes live?—In huts. They had villages of their own called Tolas.

Did that help village relief?—Yes, immensely.

Did you enquire of them what their objection to come for relief was?—It was very difficult to get any satisfactory answer. I frequently asked them to come for relief, but they would not.

Did some of them go so far as to refuse gratuitous relief?—Yes, they actually ran away from us.

(*President.*)—Did they refuse cash?—Yes, when it was conditional that they should reside in one place.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—On the plains you hadn't such trouble?—It is just as difficult on the plains to deal with Baigas and Gonds.

In your written evidence, paragraph 1 (D), you recommend that relief should be advertised; were not lists prepared?—It was difficult to prepare lists after the people had left their homes in search of jungle produce. What I mean by advertising is that the people should know of relief in time. They should not have been allowed to leave their homes; many returned home too late to sow seeds.

You distributed money from the Charitable Fund for agriculture?—Yes.

And also clothes?—Yes.

Do you think that the objects of the Charitable Fund could be modified?—No, it never occurred to me that the four objects mentioned could be modified anyhow: perhaps a little modification could be made in Object No. 1.

When did you give money to agriculturists?—At the end of May and beginning of November.

When you gave assistance for the kharif the distress was severe?—Yes, it had not subsided.

The fourth object of the Charitable Fund is to give aid when distress is subsiding, is it not?—No, it must be given when agricultural operations commence.

As regards orphans, do you think orphanages should be established where the charity fund exists?—It is against general policy.

You relieved all orphans from Government funds?—Yes.

Nothing from Charitable Funds?—No.

You think relief should be from Government funds and that the charitable funds should supply extra comforts?—Yes.

Then this could be added to the objects of the Charitable Fund?—Yes.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—I do not understand your remarks in paragraph 2, under the head "Public Works Relief charges" when you say people preferred to die in their homes, and frequently those who did resort to them found insufficient alleviation of their sufferings?—Yes, as it was impossible to get medical assistance.

What assistance did you render those who were sick?—We had no medical assistance and so gave quinine, and other ordinary remedies. And it was given by people who knew nothing of medicine.

In your written evidence under (C) you say that the backbone of relief throughout the whole period of famine would have to be kitchens and village relief, do you think this would have been the case if relief was given earlier? Is not prevention better than cure?—I believe so, people cannot be kept from falling from their condition unless relief is early given.

As a matter of fact they were not opened in time?—No.

In paragraph 2 (D), you say that "the system of drafting emaciated or weakly people off the works during the rains to their homes on village relief proved most beneficial"—were emaciated people received on the works?—No, in the kitchen they had no work, but the kitchens were connected with the works; and also on task-work there were weakly persons.

Generally people from gratuitous relief were drafted to works, but your system seems to be the reverse?—Yes.

Do you think that all the deaths which took place at Mandla were reported?—As far as my information goes, I think the reports were correct. In Mandla we had one watchman for five villages, but I believe they reported all cases, except, perhaps, those who died in the jungles.

The death-rate for July is given as 16·43 and for August as 16, do you think it is exaggerated?—It is very hard to speak from impression; the deaths on relief camps were correctly reported.

Do you think medical aid was sufficient?—No.

Do you think people died without medical aid?—It was impossible to give medical aid to everyone in a vast country like this. Numbers died without medical aid.

(*Mr. Fuller*).—You have stated that during the months of July and August a good deal of distress prevailed, was this gradual or sudden?—I would not say for a moment that there were no signs of distress in the hot weather, but the general distress developed very rapidly in the rains.

Any instance?—Well, I visited Pindrai and Seoni in June, I could only find a few *bonâ fide* residents there, whom I put on village relief; in August I came back and in a single day I put 80 persons on relief.

Am I right in saying that the development was extraordinarily rapid?—Yes.

You also intended that the works should be small, was there not a rush of people?—Absolutely none, so far as I am aware.

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Did the people come from long distances or from villages around?—Except in exceptional cases they all came from villages around, I should say 15 to 20 per cent. came from villages 8 miles distant.

Then I am justified in my conclusion that if piece-work had an injurious effect, it was not very great?—Certainly not.

The area which was affected by these works was very small?—Yes.

Did you in the course of your enquiries find out whether the death-rates had anything to do with the management of the Public Works Department?—Yes, I inquired into that, and I found that there was hardly any connection.

Was the proportion of Gonds larger than that of the Hindus?—The Hindus were in larger number than Gonds.

In the kitchens you had all who were objects deserving of charity?—When the kitchens were first started all those admitted were objects of charity. In some cases they were kept too long in the kitchens and would not go away. I had to turn out scores of children.

Did people improve in condition?—Yes.

With satisfactory rapidity?—Yes.

Did you notice that the children rapidly gained in condition?—Yes; especially in cases where I prescribed extra diet, their improvement was marked.

Was there any case which showed that the village relief was inefficient?—Yes, in cases where people spent money given on wrong objects.

Did you or did you not notice that during the rains the condition of the people was worse than what it was during the hot weather?—In the hot weather it was far better than in the rains.

Did you notice people in good health becoming emaciated on the works?—Yes. They went to the works, fell off in condition, became ill, and died.

(*President.*)—So far as your experience goes of relief works in Mandla, did you think the works were popular enough to attract people who were not in need of relief?—Many Hindus who were not in need of relief did come, but not the Gonds, unless they lived close by.

How do you come to the conclusion that Hindus not in need of relief did come?—I was led to that conclusion by seeing at Jubbulpur a large number of Hindus, cultivators and labourers, on the works who were evidently not in need of relief.

To what caste did they belong?—Kurmis and Lodhis.

How did you know that they were not in actual want?—By making enquiries in the village I found that they had enough to live on.

Had they grain stored and money saved?—They had both.

What time was that?—In March, just at the end of harvesting operations.

The harvest was a short one, was it not?—Yes, except in the low land.

Lt. E. N. Heale.

14th Mar. 1898.

LIEUTENANT E. N. HEALE, 7th Bombay Infanty, Famine Relief Officer, Sehora and Majholi, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

A.—To my knowledge there were no departures from the principles of the Central Provinces Famine Code during the recent famine.

B.—I am of opinion that the measures adopted were successful as regards saving life and economy.

C.—I am of opinion that less expense would be incurred if those receiving gratuitous relief were paid as far as possible in grain instead of in money; also that payment in grain would probably insure children receiving a proper allowance of food, for I found that some parents were inclined to save the money they received and not to give their children sufficient food.

D.—I have no other recommendation or opinion to offer.

(*President.*)—What was your Circle?—Sehora and Majholi at first and afterwards I was transferred to Dindori Tahsil in the Mandla district.

How many circle inspectors were under you?—Two Revenue Inspectors.

When did you take charge of famine work?—26th March.

Were the two Inspectors appointed before you took charge?—Yes.

How many villages had these Inspectors in their charge?—About 200.

When you took charge had the giving of gratuitous relief commenced?—Yes, according to the Code.

When did you commence giving it in a more liberal manner?—Just before the rains.

The distress was not great then?—Distress increased in the rains.

Can you tell us how?—On account of damp, fever and dysentery broke out, and one work having been closed at the beginning of the rain some people were without work.

Did people on the work suffer from fever and dysentery?—Yes.

How many kitchens were under you?—In my Circle in the Jubbulpore District 13.

Does that include those on works?—Yes.

That was in addition to village relief?—Yes.

How did the kitchen system work?—It was a great success as far as children were concerned.

Many kitchens were at considerable distances, were they not?—Yes, but wherever possible I sent children to kitchens.

Did many children come?—Yes, except those prevented from coming owing to floods and nullahs.

If you thought they could not come you gave them doles?—Yes.

Doles in cash?—Yes.

Do you think it would be better to give grain-doles?—Yes, I prefer it to the cash-dole. I found that the Revenue Inspectors used to put their friends and relatives on the cash-dole list. These people always tried to get the cash-dole and did not care for the grain-dole.

Had the people any difficulty in disposing of the grain-dole?—I don't think so, but they preferred the cash-dole.

Did you pay them weekly or bi-weekly?—First daily and then monthly.

Did you find it inconvenient to pay them daily?—It required tremendous checking.

Was the payment made through mukkadams?—Yes, it was certain that the mukkadams were taking a percentage out of the payments.

Had you anything to do with relief works?—Yes. I was in charge of two or three.

What kind of works?—Tanks and road works. One large irrigation tank where I had about 4,000 people, and afterwards I was in charge of Chandanpore road work.

Is this one of the works now closed?—Yes.

The substitution of piece-work for task-work practically closed these works, did it not?—It was necessary to drive away from the works people who were not in need of relief and others who had to go and attend to their fields.

Do you think there were many on the works who did not want relief?—Yes.

How did you diagnose that?—They seemed to be in perfectly good health, strong and healthy and looked fairly well-off.

How many poor-houses?—One at Sehora and another small one at Baharibund.

What class of people came to the poor-houses?—Generally wanderers, and many from the Native State of Rewa and others from Panna.

Was it difficult to keep them in the poor-houses or did they stay willingly?—It was hard to get them to come, but once in they were not anxious to leave.

Were they mostly people in bad state of health?—Yes.

Were they allowed extra food?—Yes.

Have you come to any conclusion as to the sufficiency of rations in the poor-houses?—I think it was quite sufficient.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Was the money-dole given sufficient in your opinion?—It was quite sufficient for the individuals themselves, but not for large families.

Did you give a separate allowance for children?—Yes.

Would not the money-dole be sufficient in that case?—Yes.

Was there any case in which you found that the money-dole given was not sufficient for the families?—I used to go round and see the children belonging to each family, but sometimes it was not possible to collect them all. What I mean to say is that there were cases in which the dole was not sufficient. When for instance there was a large family of which only 2 or 3 children were emaciated and given relief, the dole was generally shared by the rest of the family.

Was the money-dole supposed to be sufficient to purchase the minimum ration?—Yes.

Did you make any special enquiry as to the mortality in the Jubbulpore District?—No.

When were kitchens started?—About August.

Under what rules were they worked?—The rules framed at the Jubbulpore Conference on the 2nd August.

Did you find these rules quite sufficient?—Yes.

Have you any alteration to suggest?—No.

Under these rules you referred children in good condition to the Circle Inspector for a ticket?—Yes.

Then till they got a ticket they did not get food?—Yes, they did get relief meantime.

Who was generally in charge of kitchens?—Malguzars, and sometimes the police, and on the works the officer in charge of the works.

Whenever there was a kitchen within two miles the children were told to go to it, were they not?—Yes.

Did you find that the kitchen allowance was sufficient for the children?—The first allowance was altered and the second was better. I think it was sufficient.

What was the second allowance?—It was an allowance given to children according to their ages. A gradation allowance.

What was the highest allowance?—About nine chattaks.

Was that sufficient?—I think so.

How many meals had they in the kitchen?—One meal a day in the kitchens under police control and on others two meals a day.

Did they carry off what they did not eat?—Yes.

What wages did you offer on the works?—The same as the Public Works Department; only the work was under me.

Who was actually in charge of them?—A Work Agent and Naib-Tahsildar.

Were you transferred to Mandla in September?—Yes, I was in charge of the Dindori Tahsil.

Is not that a very mountainous part of the district?—Yes.

Who were the people on the works there?—Chiefly Gonds.

What relief measures were in progress when you arrived there?—There was a good deal of chaos.

Under what agency?—Under Circle Inspectors.

Were their number increased after you went there?—Yes, a good many were added on my recommendation.

Was a list of people on relief kept up?—No.

Was there any village relief?—Yes, but not under any system until I took charge. The Patwaris had a sort of list made, but they had mostly school children and *parda nashins* on their list.

Did you add to the list?—Yes: we had about 400 in the whole tahsil at first, but this number eventually went up to 7,500.

Was there considerable distress in the tahsil?—Yes.

Was the death-rate high?—Yes.

Many corpses picked up?—A few only to my knowledge.

How long did it take you to organize?—Two weeks.

Do you think distress diminished by these measures?—Yes.

Was there any difficulty about grain supply?—Yes, when I went to Dindori there was no grain. I took measures to import grain. There was a lot of grain in stock belonging to Government, and this was sold off to a man who imported it to Dindori and sold it to the people at a certain rate fixed by us. There was grain at Dindori, but the banias were asking absurd rates.

You sold off grain in stock at the different relief centres to contractors?—Yes.

At what rate did your man sell the grain?—Sixteen seers a rupee latterly, but at first the grain was sold a few seers cheaper than the banias' rate.

You said that the death-rates were high. Did you make any special enquiries regarding the Dindori tahsil?—Yes. The mortality for 1896 was higher than that in 1897.

You mean that the mortality in 1896 was more than the average?—Yes.

What was the cause?—Great deal of fever and cholera. The mortality was high among the Gonds, as it is very difficult to get them to come for relief or to the kitchens. They suffered a good deal from bowel complaints owing to unwholesome food.

Did you find that the Gonds feared to take gratuitous relief?—Yes, in the beginning.

Did they go to the works afterwards?—Yes. At the Shahpura Public Works Department work, we had a number of them. They were most anxious to work but unfortunately cholera broke out and it was found that owing to the introduction of piece-work on that work, they were not able to earn enough to provide themselves with sufficient food.

Later on they earned 3 annas a day on that work, did they not?—Yes, but that was owing to change in the rules, but they left the works when the rates were reduced and they found they could not earn 3 annas a day. Some 3,000 left the works.

Are you quite sure that these people were Gonds?—I think they were Gonds.

Not Kols or other class of Hindus?—I think they were Gonds mostly.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—You suggest in your written evidence that gratuitous relief should be given as far as possible in grain instead of money. Would you get the banias to distribute the grain or distribute it by means of Government agency?—I would give them tickets, and send them to the banias, who will give them the grain on delivery of the ticket.

You said your Brahmin subordinates put their relatives and friends on the relief list. How did you find that out?—By enquiries I found that the list contained many Brahmins, and further enquiries showed that many of them were not fit objects for charity. This was at Jubbulpore and not Mandla.

(*Mr. Fuller*).—You just spoke of the Shahpura works. Do you know that Shahpura is a Hindu village?—Yes.

The villages surrounding it are also Hindu villages?—Yes.

The work at Shahpura you told us was a Public Works Department work?—Yes.

Well, you told us that at the Shahpura work there were a large number of Gonds?—Yes.

Are you quite sure that you could distinguish a Hindu from a Gond?—I cannot say for certain, but I thought they were mostly Gonds; I am not an authority on the subject, never before having met any Gonds.

CAPTAIN D. J. C. MACNABB, Deputy Commissioner, Seoni, called in and examined.

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I put in a written statement of evidence.

(A) (1) The following were the Government Famine Relief measures employed in the Seoni District in the late famine :—

1. Poor-houses.
2. Relief Centres.
3. Village Relief.
4. Kitchens for children.
5. Large Relief-works.
6. Civil Relief-works.
7. Famine Loan Relief-works.
8. Liberal Agricultural and Land Improvement Loans.
9. Assistance to starving wanderers.

(2) The following were the measures of Private Relief :—

1. Doles of uncooked food by the Scottish Mission.

By the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund :—

2. Clothing, etc., for the poor and infirm.
3. Maintenance of orphans.
4. Relief of respectable poor.
5. Relief of agricultural classes.
6. Cheap grain shops.

(3) I was in charge of the district from April 1897 up to the time of this note.

(4) Of the above measures of Government relief, the following were not Code measures :—

2. Relief Centres.
3. Famine Local Relief-works.

(5) The only form of relief prescribed by the Central Provinces Famine Code and not employed in this district, was that of special relief for weavers.

(6) The only important departure from Code methods were in—

(*1*) *Relief-Works.*

Where a combined system of piece-work with a fixed maximum and no minimum was substituted for the Code system of task-work. The reason for this was that in the hot weather when all labouring classes find a difficulty in obtaining employment, task-work with its attached allowances for dependants was found too attractive, and the works became flooded with the entire female population of the surrounding villages; many of whom were in affluent circumstances. I consider this the best system of relief-work, as it applies a severe labour test to those in good physical condition and supplies light work and a merely nominal task to the old, weak and emaciated. If this be combined with an efficient children's kitchen, no dependants need otherwise be provided for, as all the old, who are in a weak state, should, under proper management, be in their houses on village-relief. This system was in force on all works in this district from June onwards, and in my opinion worked extremely well.

(7) The advantages and disadvantages of the different forms of relief are, in my opinion, as follows :—

1. *Poor-houses.*—These are a necessary evil, but as instruments for the relief of distress, and especially for the saving of life, they are of little value. They are merely valuable as drafting depôts for other classes of relief. By far the greater number of inmates of poor-houses in this district were swept into them by Government agency, in the last stages of want and for them were merely dreaded ante-chambers to the grave. The cost per head including buildings was in units of one day's relief R0-1-5 or R2-10-6 per mensem, as compared with village relief allowances of R2-8-0, R2 and R0-12-0.

2. *Relief-Centres as first started in these Provinces were small poor-houses under Committees.* They have all the disadvantages of poor-houses accentuated in most cases by want of efficient supervision and hospital care and administration. For saving life they were a negligeable quantity. For relieving distress they have no special value. They were found so useless that out of ten opened eight were closed, the remaining two offered exceptional facilities for supervision ; one of them being run as poor-house and the other as a mere depôt to a poor-house a few miles distant.

3. *Village-Relief.* This is—

1. Cheap.
2. Reaches those most in need of relief.
3. It keeps the weak and emaciated in their homes and gives them a better chance of recovery than on relief-works.
4. It prevents wandering,
5. It does not take away agricultural labourers from their fields.
6. It requires a less costly staff than relief-works.
7. It saves the cost of building accommodation.

Its chief disadvantage is that it is liable to abuse, and is difficult to supervise efficiently.

Against this I would argue that supervision is a matter of funds, and that it is easier to strike off many fit persons from the list than to justify the death of one person from starvation. My own difficulty has been not to prevent Circle Inspectors being too liberal, but to make them liberal enough. Village-relief is, in my opinion, the foundation of successful famine-relief, and on it depends the control of the death-rate, to illustrate which I give the following comparative chart* of the death-rate and the numbers on village- relief in this district.

4. *Kitchens for Children.* It is admitted that in times of famine parents cannot be trusted to feed their children. The necessity of kitchens and their advantages require, therefore, no demonstration. It remains to consider their drawbacks. I find one only, though a grave one, and that is, the caste prejudice to cooked food. As a matter of fact, children, before they marry and assume it, have no caste, and this difficulty I found in the district could always be overcome, if some high-caste and influential persons could be persuaded to declare this their view. I had a little difficulty in this respect at first; but if natives have a predominant virtue, it is the love of children, and the caste difficulty was soon overcome and I had 77 children's kitchens feeding 3,997 childen, and all, with some 7 exceptions, managed by malguzars, who I found to take great pride and trouble in, and even go to personal expense in the efficient management of these kitchens. I consider this the most popular and the most efficient means of relief and the saving of life employed. The cost per head in units of a day's charge was 9 pies.

5. *Large Relief Works.*

(*a*)—Advantages.

1. Easy supervision.

2. In certain cases the remunerative or useful character of the work done.

3. The employment of an existing organization in the shape of the Public Works Department.

(*b*) —Disadvantages.

1. The collection of large masses of people in one place which tends to

2. Insanitary condition of life and surroundings, and to

3. Epidemics of disease.

4. The spread of such epidemics by the return of the workers to their homes in panic or fear of any epidemic that breaks out.

5. The impossibility of housing people as well as in their own homes, and the consequent

6. Discomfort, and

7. Exposure.

8. The added expense of existence to persons away from own homes.

9. The difficulty of firewood and consequently of the proper cooking of food.

10. The difficulty of obtaining vegetables or herbs, which can be obtained for nothing in their own villages or the jungles near it.

11. The difficulty of ensuring the employment of workers by families.

12. The demoralising tendency of large numbers of persons herding together.

*Not pinted.

13. The encouragement such works give families to leave their homes and take to wandering.

14. The employment of large numbers of people not really in need of relief.

15. The difficulty of ensuring that those really in need of work are invariably received on works.

16. The impossibility of employing large numbers for any length of time in the same place. The consequent necessity of moving relief camps and the frequent discomfort and hardships experienced by the workers owing to such moves.

17. The expenses incurred on hutting in large relief camps as compared with village relief works where workers live in their own houses.

18. The difficulty of providing for dependants and of ascertaining their real claims on the persons bringing them.

19. The distance of large works from many portions of the tract they are arranged to provide for.

20. The unwillingness of persons in this district to leave their homes and resort to a distant relief work.

21. The difficulties so often experienced on large works in the water and food supply not frequently entailing considerable expenditure.

22. The difficulties of ensuring the return of workers to their homes on the closing of large works.

23. The great unhealthiness of relief works in the rains as compared with the district death-rate, which is expressed in the following comparative statement:—

Comparative table showing death-rate on Department Public Works Relief Works, Seoni District.

Month.	Average daily number of each month in D. P. W. relief works.	Total number of deaths during month in D. P. W. relief camps.	Death-rate per mille per mensem.	Monthly death-rate per mille of the district.	Remarks.
January 1897 .	3,169	...	...	5·3	
February . .	5,123	5	0·08	4·3	
March . .	4,875	89	18·25	4·4	
April . .	8,623	34	3·9	4·2	
May . .	12,533	59	4·7	4·5	
June . .	9,185	125	13·6	4·8	
July . .	6,532	209	32·3	8·0	
August . .	5,505	292	53·04	12·2	
September .	3,397	166	48·86	8·6	
October . .	1,112	24	21·58	5·8	

I am, for the above reasons, of opinion that so far as my experience goes the disadvantages of large relief works greatly outbalance the advantages, and that they should only be resorted to when small works and village works are insufficient for the call on them. Village works should form the backbone of relief work measures, and large works the reserve. The opposite has long been held to be the correct principle; but in those days Government laid down that their "main duty was to offer employment to those who could work, and that the relief of the helpless and infirm was the business of the charitable public."

Famine, 1837-38, North-Western Provinces.

This is very different from the responsibility now accepted by Government to prevent all deaths by starvation, and the methods for reaching this end must necessarily be widely divergent from that approved of for the former. For this reason I hold that the means to carry out the present more humane if less robust policy, is through village works, small local relief works and gratuitous relief in the shape of village relief and kitchens.

6.—*Civil Relief Works.* In this district these works were mostly tanks, field embankments, and such like village works.

The advantages are:—

1. Cheapness as compared with large works under the Public Works Department, the cost per head being 1 anna as compared with 1 anna 2 pies.

2. The works are remunerative insomuch as they improve the land or the water supply.

3. They prevent wandering, and keep the population in their own villages.

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4. The cost of building huts, etc., is avoided.

5. Being at their doors and near their own fields, forests, etc., small extras, such as vegetables, firewood, etc., can be cheaply obtained, and so the wage necessary to support life is less.

6. The administrative staff is less costly than on the Public Works Department relief works.

7. The workers being in their homes, and dealing with their own banias, are quite content with weekly payments.

The only disadvantage that, from a District Officer's point of view, I can see to this form of relief is, that Deputy Commissioners are very rarely given a sufficient staff to supervise such works closely enough.

7.—*Famine Loan Works.* These have all the advantages of Civil Relief-Works, *plus* the important one, that no need for checking the quantity of work done exists. The only check to be done is to see that employment is given to the loan-holders' villagers, and this, by the test of physical condition as seen in a muster of the village, is easily done.

There were 59 of these works in the district, and nearly all were tank works. I consider this a form of relief that with great advantage might be much more widely made use of, and had it not been for the suspicion with which malguzars regarded the novel terms of the loans, it would have been possible to have largely expanded this form of relief in this district. The works were all tank works and a source of permanent improvement to the villages.

8.—*Agricultural and Land Improvement Loans.* It was found necessary to issue nearly the whole allotment under the first head for seed grain advances, the advantages of which are obvious and the disadvantages hard to find, except we admit the bania's protest that Government is competing with his interests.

9.—*Assistance to Starving Wanderers.* This is a necessity and not a matter of argument, and needs no comment.

(2)—*Of Private Relief.* I absolutely and unhesitatingly condemn all doles of uncooked food. This was done by the Scottish Mission and by rich natives, and as any one will accept this form of charity, there was little discrimination. The doles given by natives of India were mostly insufficient to support life alone. That given to children was stolen or robbed by the stronger ones or bartered by children, unable to cook themselves, for unwholesome sweets or trash in the bazar. Twice the Mission funds failed and threw on the first occasion 467 and the second 850 persons on to the hands of the District officials. The total result of such private charity was to fill the town of Seoni with a mass of starving and intractable beggars, to whom it was useless to offer village-relief, who would not go to either poor-houses or relief-works, but gained a precarious and scanty living and wandered houseless about the town till too weak to evade the Police, when they were swept into the poor-house to swell the mortality in that melancholy institution. Relief by the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund has been separately reported on, and I will merely state that 21,713 units received relief under the four heads at a cost of R6-1-7 per head, the allotment for the district being R1,33,130. It is impossible to acknowledge too warmly the benefits conferred by this Fund to the population at large.

B-I.—It is difficult to gauge the exact measure of success of the famine-relief measures in my district. The only direct test is its actual effects on mortality as shown in the vital statistics, and to show this I quote from the heading of "Mortality" in the final Famine Report for the district and comprising the period from 1st October 1896 to 31st October 1897.

* * * * *

"The period under report, *i.e.*, 1st October 1896 to 31st October 1897, opened with the death-rate nearly treble the normal. During November there was a great fall in the death-rate to 4·1 per mille per mensem. In December 1896 it rose to 4·6 and then fell gradually, until it reached 4·2 in April. In May it rose to 4·5, reached 6·8 in June and 8·0

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in July and culminated in 12·2 in August, and the period under report closed with the death-rate at 5·8. Statements VI (e) and (f) should now be examined, especially the months from July onwards, and it cannot fail to be observed that as gratuitous relief expanded the mortality declined. The rise in the death-rate in July was met by a large extension of village relief and the opening of 77 kitchens. In September the result was manifest and the further extension in August and September was further echoed by another drop in October 1897. These figures are so plain that it is needless to try and fortify them with comments and examples. They stand beacon lights in Famine administration, and the advice they flash is the extension of village-relief."

* * * * *

The comparative chart on page 11 displays clearly this effect of relief on the vital statistics.

This proves that as relief was expanded, and especially village-relief, that the mortality fell. With a death-rate of 12·3 per mille per mensem in August, the mortality if uncontrolled must have risen to 20 per mille per mensem and more in the unhealthy months of September and October, and that it was on the contrary reduced to 8·3 and 5·8 is a very strong proof of success.

The indirect proof of successful famine administration is that but a small percentage of persons deserted their homes and took to wandering. The number of wanderers relieved and sent to relief-institutions is the best proof of this; the total number so dealt with during the famine is 6,016.

Had no relief measures been attempted I consider that the monthly deaths per mille would have risen to 40 in August, September and October, and have averaged about 18 per mille per mensem or 216 per mille per annum, and that the decrease in the population would have been 71,382 instead of 20,871. These figures refer to the excess of deaths over births, and not to deaths directly due to famine. The estimate of the death-rate without relief measures is based on mere supposition, and is more likely understated than over-estimated. The above figures show that the decrease of the population would have been roughly three times what it was if no relief measures had been instituted.

As far as success may be judged of by its having reached those most in need of it, the fact is that out of the total number of 29,623 deaths from 1st October 1896 to 31st October 1897, only 1,023 persons died of privation, *i.e.*, of the more or less direct effects of insufficient food, though these were all in receipt of relief. It is clear therefore that by far the greater number of deaths were from ordinary causes working on a population in a low state of vitality induced by the prevalent famine conditions. I think therefore that the measures of relief in this district of Seoni may be credited with a fair measure of success, though I am far from holding that had we started with our present experience a far more complete measure of success could not have been achieved.

From the point of economy it is still more difficult for a mere District Officer to judge of the degree of success attained, the more so that in the former famines the figures as given in the report of the Famine Commission of 1880 are very incomplete. The following comparative table of the cost per cent. to the State expresses all the comparison I can find possible :—

Comparative Table showing number of units, total direct cost, and the cost per unit.

Name of District and Provinces.		Total number of units relieved.	Total cost of direct famine relief.	Cost per unit.	Remarks.
			₹	₹ a. p.	
1896-97. Seoni District.		3,970,932	2,67,430	0 1 1	
1876-78	Mysore	65,940,000	29,50,000	0 1 5	
	Hyderabad	9,090,000	10,82,000	0 1 10	
	Bombay	123,897,930	1,17,00,000	0 1 6	
	N.-W. P.	25,012,080	19,92,200	0 1 4	

From these figures which are extracted from those given on page 24 of the above-quoted report, the District Famine administration may at least claim to be economical. The figures only include direct expenditure on relief-works and gratuitous relief.

At the commencement of a famine to test its severity, or when famine is apprehended, it does not in my opinion suffice to trust to test works, or the willingness of the public to accept doles of cooked food, to prove the reality or acuteness of distress. That the public resort to such test works or accept cooked food may prove the existence of famine; but the converse does not prove that there is no famine. My experience is that the natives of this country will die in their houses or, if Gonds, wander in the jungles till death surprises them, without coming to test works, relief-centres or poor-houses for cooked food. It is possible to tour through such a country and not see signs of severe distress when it exists in an acute form. The only real and safe test is to muster the entire population of a village and inspect them, and this test should be insisted on whenever famine is apprehended. It is only the well-to-do who object to appear, and their presence is not required and need not be insisted on. The next step in my opinion is the extension of village-relief to all in a reduced state of physique, for this is the class who swell the death-rate, and to bring them on to relief-works only places them under more unfavourable conditions for recovery. They can be struck off village-relief and sent to relief-works later on when fit for it. I would next organize children's kitchens and, simultaneously with the above forms of relief, I would open poor-houses. Not till the weak and unfit for work and children had been provided for would I turn my attention to the strong. These—the workers—would have already been assisted by the relief afforded to them by the State support to their children and household burdens. I would then start, or if possible concurrently, with the above gratuitous relief, village works, any works calculated to keep village communities intact and check the tendency to wandering; and not until such works proved insufficient would I start large works, which, as I have already noted under head A, have every possible disadvantage from the point of view of saving life. Such works entail great hardship and discomfort on the workers, tend to insanitary conditions and epidemics, and the spread of such after inception; and during the rains the conditions of life on relief-works are in my opinion such as to render their complete closing advisable. My experience is that private enterprise will always supply food and should not be interfered with, though at times it may be fostered and encouraged. It is illogical to expect work from an emaciated person, and thus at the commencement of a famine and when famine conditions actually exist, I would give precedence to the gratuitous forms of relief as more certain to attain the object in immediate view, *i.e.*, the saving of life and relief of distress. Not till the death-rate was reassuring would I press for economy or a full return of work. I can, however, conceive of famine conditions being averted and the use of gratuitous forms of relief rendered unnecessary by a wise and foreseeing expansion of works in time of short harvests. This, however, argues a deep and constant provincial experience of famine to which the Central Provinces has hitherto been, and may, it is to be hoped, continue to be a stranger.

I wish to lay great stress on the value of village works. I cannot but believe that large relief-works increase rather than decrease the mortality. Again, such works, though less monumental than large works, are, in my opinion, fully as remunerative in their degree, and being spread over a larger area are more accessible and effective as a form of relief. Any improvement to land, even to a single individual's holding, is an addition to the national wealth, and village roads, paths, communications, in small units, are as much a public convenience encouraging trade and wealth as large high roads. Such works are far from being exhausted in this district. Many such works could be done as famine loan works—a form of relief which has been most useful in this district and which is capable of indefinite expansion. Nearly every landholder of any consideration has some improvement he wishes to carry out. Not only this, but by doing so he keeps his labourers in the village, and is so much the gainer when the season for agricultural work comes round.

D.—The success of famine-relief measures lies as much with men as measures, and the first step on apprehension of famine should, I think, be the strengthening of district staffs and the police force. When relief measures are decided on, the more European officers that can be deputed the better and more efficient will be the famine administration. This may be called a trite truism, but I do not think that it can be too clearly or frequently insisted on. The tendency during the late famine was, in my opinion, to employ natives on insignificant pay in positions where they had large sums of money passing through their hands, instead of paying liberally and employing men of standing in a position to give security if necessary. The supervising staff was also in this district far too small. With 13,587 persons

on village relief, there was not a single special European supervising officer appointed, and all the circle officers were temporary or officiating Naib-Tahsildars. It is impossible to expect the same results under these conditions as when relief is under the supervision of European circle officers. Such officers were employed with the greatest success in neighbouring districts, and I recommend their employment in every district in which famine is declared to exist.

2. The tendency of relief works to compete with agricultural labour is a great difficulty.

In Seoni District such labourers are very commonly paid in kind at harvest time. In times of famine the small landowners often cannot pay in cash. The labourer must have his daily food, and so he goes on or continues on relief-works and the harvest which is to end the famine suffers. To meet this difficulty, I would advise "labour loans," bearing no interest, and repayable on the reaping of the crops, to be given to employers of agricultural labour. It is quite simple to ascertain the number of labourers usually employed and thrown out of work in any given village. Their names and the landowner covenanting to employ them under the terms of the labour-loan could be entered on the register of those on village relief and their muster and the inspection of their physical condition at the same time as those on village relief would be ample proof and check of the right employment of the labour-loans. Such a system if widely applied should go far to assist cultivation (a most vital point) and also to render large relief-works unnecessary during the rains.

3. The improvement of famine methods of relief was fully discussed in the Jubbulpore Divisional Famine Conference, and the results embodied by the President, Mr. Fuller, C.S., C.I.E., in a draft revision of the Central Provinces Famine Code, in which I fully concur and to which I am unable to offer further suggestions.

(*President.*)—You were transferred to the district in 1897 ?—Yes.

You have had no previous acquaintance with the people of the Central Provinces ?—No.

You say in your written evidence, with reference to relief works, "the works became flooded with the entire female population of the surrounding villages, many of whom were in affluent circumstances." How did you ascertain their affluence ?—That is a matter of common notoriety. Some of the women I have seen with jewellery of value and personal ornaments.

What kind of personal ornaments ?—Silver and gold.

What class of people ?—These would be the wives and female relatives of well-to-do *Kasans*.

You saw people with gold ornaments on them, did you ?—Yes.

Do you know whether they were Hindus or what ?—They were mostly Hindus of the better class.

This system which you describe of payment by results, is it the *D* wage as a maximum with no minimum ? —I don't exactly recollect.

Was it piece-work system ?—There was no limit to the small amount which they could earn if they did not work sufficiently hard.

It involves a strict elimination of people who are not robust ?—Yes.

Is it difficult to draw the line ?—I don't think we found much difficulty in drawing the line.

You don't think it breaks up families when the line is drawn ?—It may conduce to that but it was not a subject of complaint.

It may not have been a subject of complaint but it reduced the number of labourers by more than 50 per cent. ?—The reduction was owing to the time it was introduced not only to the fact that it was introduced. It is difficult to say that this reduction was entirely due to piece-work. It was due to people returning to cultivation.

Did they come back before the rain fell ?—Yes, they went back before the rain fell.

Would they return before the rain fell to prepare their fields ?—Yes, they had to get back to their villages. There had been a few softening showers which they took advantage of.

You don't attribute the falling off in numbers to the change of system ?—For a few days I did. The people made a distinct attempt by refusing to work to force us to return to the old system, but after about three days they flocked back to the work.

Who were the people in poor-houses as far as you saw. Were they people of the district or elsewhere ?—They were mostly people of the district. The number of people from outside districts and other provinces only numbered 79 and those from Native States 289. The total was 5,656.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Is that a running total ?—Yes.

(*President.*)—How did it happen that so many were swept into the poor-houses as you say ?—Because they hide away. They won't come into the poor-houses, especially the professional beggars. These remarks were made with reference to Seoni town where there was a large amount of professional beggars. It was impossible to provide for them in any way. They would not go to the relief works. They flooded back for the doles. When the rains began they got into very bad condition.

When were relief centres opened ?—They were opened before I took charge at a very early stage of the famine. They died out as being useless.

Why did these beggars not go to them ?—Because they were attracted to Seoni and other large towns by the hope of alms which were given by the richer natives.

There is a difference of opinion as to whether parents can be trusted to feed their children or not. I see you say it is admitted that in times of famine parents cannot be trusted to feed their children. Again you say but if natives have a predominant virtue it is the love of children. Do you think that parents were not starving while they were starving their children ?—I think they would allow their children to starve before they would starve themselves.

What do you mean by the predominant virtue of love of children ?—A well-to-do person will allow a starving adult to go unfed ; but if he has means he will give charity to a child.

How did you prove this fact about the children ?—By the numerous cases of personal inspection in which I found *Gond* women in an excessively good condition while their children were absolutely starving and emaciated.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Were these *Gond* women at the time getting money relief ?—Yes, a great many were.

(*President.*)—As regards this comparative table showing the death-rate on Public Works Departm ent relief works, how were the figures worked out ?—They were worked out by the total number of people on works for a month and the total number of deaths which occurred in the month.

Who gave the death-rate for the camp ?—They were reported by the Police weekly and checked when we went round to inspect the camps.

If this were the death-rate in camp, I am afraid the death-rate of people working on relief works must have been greater, because people would go away when they found themselves getting ill ?—One would presume so. I certainly found that a great many left works when they got ill and died in their villages. On the other hand many hopeless cases were sent to relief works to die.

What agency had you on Civil relief works. Who managed them ?—We had special Circle officers, and in their absence tahsildars or naib-tahsildars.

Had you one in each circle ?—Yes.

Were village works, tanks, etc., successfully carried out do you think ?—I think they were. They were certainly successful in giving relief. So far as I saw in my inspections the amount of work done was very fair indeed.

Are tanks used for irrigation or only for cattle drinking ?—A very large proportion are used for irrigation in the Karai and Barghat circles.

Were they mostly famine loan works ?—The tank works were.

The Scottish Mission you speak of in paragraph 10 of your note, is that located in the town of Seoni ?—Yes.

Were their doles distributed only in the town ?—Only in Seoni.

You say on page 138 of your written note that out of the total number of 29,623 deaths from the 1st October 1896 to the 31st October 1897, only 1,023 persons died of privation. How did you calculate that ?—Another head "privation" was introduced afterwards, and it was laid down that privation should be entered in the return and reports were made accordingly. There was a good deal of confusion at first.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—What was a privation death ? —That was practically the death of a person from want of

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food who did not happen to be in receipt of relief. If a person died in a poor-house shortly after admission from want of food the doctor certified that it was due to starvation, but if he had been in receipt of relief for a long time, say for ten days, then it would be classed as privation.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—Was not some discretion exercised in the matter of returning deaths?—Yes.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—When did your village gratuitous relief begin?—It had been in existence before I took charge.

What was the number of persons in receipt of relief?—It did not exceed 2,000, when I took chage, but it increased in May and June.

What caused the increase?—The deteriorated condition of the people.

And then did you increase your village inspection agency at the same time?—That came later.

Had you not increased your Circle Inspectors?—Yes, there had been an increase on the normal staff before I came, and there was a further increase in July, I think.

The kitchens you refer to in your written evidence when were they started?—They were started at the end of June and July.

When did you reach your maximum numbers?— At the end of August or beginning of September.

Do you think you should have had them earlier,—I think it would have been better if they had come earlier.

Then with regard to your advantages and disadvantages on large relief works, you say — there is the difficulty of ensuring the employment of workers by families. What difficulty is that?—The families had got separated even before piece-work was introduced. You would find a wife in one gang, the husband in another.

Could they not be put together?—Well, they were when it was noticed.

You were in favour of piece-work as early as April. Why do you think it was desirable to have piece-work?—The physical condition of the people was excellent at that time.

Was that not a good thing?—The difficulty was to exact an adequate task.

Were any penalties enforced?—Yes. They would rather take their reduced wages and not do the full task.

You say that one of the disadvantages is the difficulty of ensuring that those really in need of work are invariably received on works. Would that difficulty occur on the ordinary task-work system?—When a large number come to work a number are often told by some understrapper to go away. One never found instances when it has occurred through the orders of the relief officer, but it is certain that a large number of people who came to work went away without getting it.

Did you satisfy yourself about that?—They were not turned off by hundreds, but in the villages I met numerous cases of persons who had applied for work and come away without it.

Did you bring this to the notice of the Public Works Department?—Yes.

What did they do?—They did what they could to rectify it.

How many relief works were there in the district under the Public Works Department?—Four.

Was that sufficient in your opinion to give people relief within reasonable distance from their homes?—I think it would have been better if there had been a larger number of smaller works.

But provided there were more works it would not matter if they were under the Public Works Department or Civil Agency. I suppose the small works should be managed by the Public Works Department?—No.

It is not material to your scheme whether they were managed by the Public Works Department or not?—No.

As to Civil relief-works, who looked after these?—The Revenue Inspectors inspected them.

But they were not always on the spot. Who was on the spot?—We had mohurrirs and a sub-overseer.

Who chose the labourers. Could anybody come who wanted work?—Yes.

Under that system a person not in need might be getting relief?—These Civil works, as a matter of fact, were only resorted to from villages in the immediate neighbourhood. Under these circumstances it would be easy to ascertain if persons on works needed the relief or not.

Was a selection made or was anybody allowed to go?—The sub-overseer was supposed to take anybody who wanted work and the circle officer to exercise discretion as to who was given work.

Who measured up the work?—It was done by muharrirs and sub-overseers, and it was checked by tahsildars and naib-tahsildars.

Do you think you got a fair task out of the people?—It was paid for by the piece.

Was a contract given to anybody?—The numbers were too small.

You say the supervising staff was far too small. What staff is that you are referring to?—Officers of the stamp of tahsildars.

You advise works being carried out as famine loan works?—That is a mere suggestion for the future.

Would that come under the Land Improvement Act or the Agriculturists' Loans Act?—Agriculturists' Loans Act.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—You spoke of women of the better class of Hindus coming to works. Did they come with their male relatives?—Sometimes they had their male relatives, but they generally had their children with them. The works were quite close to their villages, and the women would come in order to earn something extra.

Do you think Hindus of the better class would send their women to work amongst strangers?—I am only speaking of what I observed.

You judge from what you saw or did you make special enquiries?—Naturally I made enquiries as to the class to which they belonged.

As regards the gold ornaments which you saw them wear, what sort of ornaments were they?—Ear-rings and such things.

From what I know they spend most of their earnings on silver?—Silver was certainly commoner than gold.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—One of the disadvantages on large relief works is that it involves the employment of large numbers on relief?—I have already stated that one frequently notices on works people coming from the immediate vicinity who are certainly not very hard up and come to works because the works were in their neighbourhood.

Does not that apply still more strongly to small village works?—For village works you would be able to use the malguzar more. From his knowledge of things he would send to relief only those who wanted it.

You would depend entirely upon the malguzar for the people who are to be employed on the works?—Yes, he is the man.

Under your arrangements anybody who applied would have to be admitted by the malguzar?—Yes, you would have to allow a certain amount of selection.

What else can you rely on besides the malguzar to prevent labourers from coming who might have earned their livelihood in some other way and have resources of their own?—This is a matter that you can always ascertain from the village public.

The number would be limited by the quantity of work there was to be done. What would you do with the others?—Open another work.

Another village work?—Yes.

Would you open them without limit. Can you employ a whole village?—For a certain period you can.

Until the rains I suppose?—Yes.

Then after that?—During the rains I think everybody who was fit would get agricultural work, and then I would put the rest on gratuitous relief.

(*President.*)—How do you make out from the chart attached to your evidence that the death-rate declined in consequence of village relief?—We increased our village relief when we observed that the death-rate was increasing, and the result was that we succeeded in preventing its going above the figure it reached in August, 12·8. And we greatly lowered it in September and October, the most unhealthy months.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—With reference to your remarks about relief works. In the hot weather is it your opinion

that the workers on these works were in good condition and that a certain amount of stringency was justifiable to make the relief more effective than it was?—Yes.

At that time is it your opinion that the majority of people on works were living at a distance or close by?—The majority lived in villages in the close vicinity.

You can give us no idea as to whether a number came from 7 or 8 miles away?—I think that hardly any came from beyond that distance.

Then the area served by relief works must have been very small?—Yes.

With regard to the way in which distress developed, in the spring, the death-rate was very low. On the other hand, we have the fact recorded in your evidence that there was a good deal of distress among children. Was the development gradual or sudden?—Very sudden. The rains broke and then held off for a period of a fortnight or three weeks. This took the people away from relief works to their villages for cultivation, and my theory is that having arrived there they waited for the rain. Meanwhile they were not in receipt of wages and for this reason their physical condition deteriorated very rapidly. *Capt. D. J. C. Macnabb.* — *14th Mar. 1898.* ——

With reference to kitchens, did you find them popular with the malguzars?—Very popular.

Was there any difficulty in getting people there?—None, when the leading people backed up the movement.

MR. B. ROBERTSON, C.I.E., Deputy Commissioner, Jabalpur, called in and examined.

I put in a written answers to the Commission's questions.

I have been asked to draw up a note on four points :—

(A) Departures during the recent famine from the principles of the Famine Code.

(B) Degree of success attending these departures.

(C) Advice as to measures and methods of working likely to prove effective in future.

(D) Other recommendations and opinions.

I find it very difficult to deal with these heads separately, so I propose first to answer in a general manner the questions set by the Commission with regard to relief-centres and relief-works, in which most departures from the Code took place. I shall then add a few remarks regarding some of the other measures of relief.

(a)—*Relief-Centres.*

* 185. In this district it was found necessary to open 19 relief-centres. These were intended for the support of the helpless until village relief should be provided, and for giving employment to the weakly in the shape of light labour. In some cases money doles and in others grain were distributed.

As it took time to get village relief started and Public Works Relief camps established, these centres were started as a means of giving relief in the interval.

186. An attempt was made to exact work from the able-bodied, but, I fear, with little success. It may be noted that only persons fit for light work were supposed to be relieved at the relief-centres, but under the local Committees established to manage them, all and sundry flocked to the centres. The latter became overcrowded, and the exaction of a tale of work was next to impossible. The work generally undertaken was the clearing of tanks. The workers were cooped up in the narrow space of the tank bed, and were unable to do any real work.

187. The collection of large numbers of people at these centres made the latter unmanageable. I cannot say that epidemic disease was in any case the direct result, though it is extremely likely that to these large assemblages of people (especially in Murwara was there overcrowding) may be attributed the sharp outbreak of cholera which took place in February-March in that tahsil.

188. I do not advocate the establishment of relief centres. They were found almost impossible to manage; they were resorted to by others than those unable to work or only fit for light labour, and they thus to some extent provided practically gratuitous relief to the able-bodied of the neighbourhood.

189. It would have been in every way better to have opened regular relief-works, and to have completed village relief arrangements at an earlier date than was actually the case, in the localities where relief-centres were resorted to. The opening of regular relief-works took time, as staff and tools had to be got together, but I think the establishment of village relief should in future be done with greater expedition. I would in this connection suggest the *immediate increase of the Revenue Inspector Agency*, on famine being declared. The materials for such increase are at hand in the shape of patwaris of intelligence and experience. The Revenue Inspectors and selected patwaris could be assembled at Tahsil head-quarters or elsewhere, and in a couple of days thoroughly taught how to prepare village registers of poor, and allotting 70 or 80 villages to each, there is no reason why the registers should not be prepared and checked within 15 days. In the present famine a good deal of uncertainty seems to have prevailed as to the persons to be brought on the registers. On account of the insufficiency of the Inspecting Agency, lists of poor were incorrectly prepared, and much delay resulted. This could have been avoided had the Inspecting Agency been promptly strengthened and trained. *Mr. B. Robertson.* — *14th Mar. 1898.* ——

190. I would never again resort to relief-centres. In this connection I would refer to a suggestion which has been made by Mr. Fuller, that in specified tracts, where it would be difficult to open regular relief-works, especially at the commencement of a famine, village lists should be prepared not only of those unable to work but also of persons in need of work. The latter will be required to labour on works, such as excavating tanks or bunding fields, which should be already decided upon and entered in the Famine Note Books, and the labourers will be paid an allowance through the mukaddam and patwari. I consider that this is a substitute for relief-centres which should succeed. There need not be a work in every village. Several villages could be grouped together for the purpose. I have much more faith in the management of one man, the village mukaddam, than of a *panch*. Our past experience of Relief Committees has not been always satisfactory.

191. A relief-centre generally served an area of 5 to 6 miles radius, but wanderers were numerous at the time relief-centres were most in evidence, and many outsiders were also taken in.

192. Unofficial agency was utilized in the management of relief centres. The centres speedily became too large to be properly looked after by the local Committees. The latter are hardly to be blamed, as the work was beyond their power but they were able to exercise very little control and the experiment is one, as I have said, that I should hardly care to repeat.

(b)—*Relief-Works.*

The two chief departures from the principles of the Famine Code were the different classification of labourers, and the introduction of piece-work. The elaborate Code classification was from the first abandoned. Piece-work was introduced gradually from about the month of May. In the answers given below to questions of the Commission dealing with relief-works these matters will be noted on.

I. Extent to which works of public utility may be available as relief works.

53—56. A great deal of road work was undertaken in this district. At first attention was to a large extent confined to the Mirzapur Road, which runs through the centre of the district north from Jabalpur. In the end of March, as it was found that the works on this road were not affording relief to outlying parts of the district, the charges on the Mirzapur Road were transferred to other roads entered in the road programme of the district. At the same time collection of murram was generally substituted for the breaking of metal.

The road work which has latterly been done will generally be of permanent service to the community, and it will be possible to effectively maintain a considerable portion of the murram roads constructed. But, except on the roads already metalled, *e. g.*, the Jabalpur-Seoni Road, the Marble

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

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Rocks Road and part of the Kundum Road, the metal that has been broken will be comparatively useless. In future I should advocate metal collection, as a means of employment of relief labour, being undertaken only on roads which are already metalled, or which can without any question be maintained as metalled roads.

On all other roads the proper form of employment, so far as this district is concerned, is the collection of murram. The advantage of a murramed road is, that murram is easily consolidated, and a road once properly spread with murram can be kept in repair at very moderate cost.

Considerable scope still exists in this district for the construction of these murramed roads. Sufficient employment in this shape could be found in every part of the district, except Murwara, should it be necessary, a few years hence to open relief-works. For the breaking of metal there is, one the other hand, very little scope.

57 and 59. Village tanks form a useful enough means of employment of relief labour, but the form of employment has also its drawbacks. The deepening of a tank is a work which is popular with the native community, though the benefits thus conferred on the village are often perhaps questionable. Comparatively few tanks in this district can be used for irrigation purposes. There is again the difficulty of employing large bodies of workers on tank excavation, as there are not many tanks which can conveniently hold more than 1,000 or 1,500 labourers.

What I should propose is the selection of a certain number of large tank works, either existing reservoirs to be deepened or new reservoirs to be excavated, particularly with a view to irrigation. These large works should be first undertaken. When the system of famine work has thoroughly got into swing, which can only be the case if to begin with the entire work is directly under the eye of the supervising officer, it would be possible later on to have the labourers of one charge divided up over two or three smaller tank works at a distance of, say, 5 or 6 miles. I may mention that in future I would advocate the size of the charge being reduced below 5,000 or 6,000, which was the standard laid down in the present famine. I think about 3,000 is a more manageable number, and in a future famine it is to be hoped that there will be a greater number of men available for appointment to a charge. The plan of having the work spread over two or three places would be open to less objection with the reduction in the size of the charge.

60. The supply of village tanks is practically unlimited, and large numbers of people could be employed on them in a future famine, but their value for purposes of irrigation is not generally great.

61—63. Very little has been done to construct new impounding reservoirs, most of the tank work undertaken in the present famine being in the nature of clearing existing tanks. The tanks selected were, as far as possible, those capable of irrigating the surrounding fields. The deepening of these tanks will be useful as a protection against failure of crops in the land which can be watered by them. As I have mentioned a large proportion of the tanks in this district are not suitable for irrigation purposes, being below the ground level, so that in a future famine if the excavating of tanks with a view to irrigation is undertaken, it will be necessary to have resort, in the main, to new works. I think, if projects were deliberately investigated beforehand, that considerable scope exists for the construction of new reservoirs, and I would recommend that a programme of such works should be drawn up and kept ready for use in case of famine.

From the programme thus drawn up, which should include also the improvement of existing tanks of use for irrigation purposes, it should be perfectly feasible to select large projects on which work should first be begun, and where the whole method of famine-working could be easily learnt by the staff. Once everything is in working order, there should be no great difficulty in undertaking smaller works, necessitating the splitting up of the charge, when the large work has been finished.

An important argument in favour of small works, especially at the end of the hot weather, is that it would put people back to the neighbourhood of their villages and would enable cultivators to attend to their fields. It is well also to have a reserve of such small works available, in the case of a severe outbreak of epidemic disease. In the present year, we were very fortunate as regards comparative freedom from cholera. The total failure of the mango crop may have perhaps helped to this end, coupled with the adoption of strict sanitary precautions. But it would be unsafe to always to count on such immunity, so that for this reason alone it would be well to have a scheme of tank works to fall back upon.

II.—Distance test.

71—83. In this district it was generally found that people outside the class of general labourers, were unwilling to leave their homes and go and live on a relief-work at a distance. With many of the labouring classes, especially the Kols, there is no such rooted objection to seeking work at a distance, but almost every person in any way connected with the land, either as cultivator or farm labourer, can with difficulty be got to leave the neighbourhood of his village.

In general, about 5 or 6 miles may be taken as the distance at which a relief-work will draw. When it is possible for people to occasionally return home, they will remain on the relief-work at night, and in this way many of the labourers stayed on or about the works, especially in the fair season. Residence was not made a condition of relief, and people were allowed to come and go as they chose.

I would not make residence obligatory, nor would I recommend any general plan of conveying people long distances by rail to large public works so far as this district is concerned.

It would not be practicable in this district to open a few large relief-works and require people to go great distances to these. This was practically how matters stood in March 1897, except for the presence of the relief-centres, in the northern half of the district. The large works were almost all spread out along the Mirzapur Road, which runs north through the centre of the district. The people in the villages at a distance from the road would not come on the works, and severe distress was reported from several of the outlying parts of the district, the people preferring to starve in their houses rather than go to the works. As a consequence, the programme of works had to be altered, and relief-works started in places where people would go to them.

III.—Task and piece-work.

85—93. Piece-work is not suitable for the employment of relief-labourers in all cases. But it is in my opinion the best way of employing the able-bodied. In the present famine, piece-work has not had a fair trial. The labourers were already spoiled by the easy conditions of task-work, and had got to regard idling, even though accompanied by the penal wage, as quite the best way of passing their time. They naturally objected to piece-work being introduced, after having had experience of the easier conditions of existence under the task-work system.

I think that Mr. Higham's suggestions in paragraphs 37 and 38 of his note are very much to the point. Begin with piece-work for all labourers in good health. If it is found that famine conditions are developing to a severe extent, and that numbers of feeble persons are coming to the works, it may then be necessary to change. But even then I would not readily go back to task-work pure and simple. It is best, I think, to still keep piece-work for the able-bodied, putting the feeble and infirm into separate gangs employed on the analogy of the task system. It was found in the present famine that there was no objection in practice to having infirm gangs employed on task-work, side by side with able-bodied gangs, whose work was paid for by the piece.

The question of fixing a maximum limit to piece-work earnings is one that presents some difficulty. We had latterly to resort to this, and I think it will generally be necessary. If workers are not allowed to earn more than a certain wage, it becomes incumbent on us to support their dependants. As famine developes, it will, in my opinion, be necessary to have piece-work subject to a maximum wage, and to undertake the support of non-working children and dependants.

94—103. The task-work classification of the present Code was abandoned. I am of opinion that the proposals contained in Mr. Higham's note, paragraph 15, give a good and workable form of classification.

If labourers persistently fail to perform the task set them fining becomes necessary. It is not generally expedient to fine oftener than twice a week. Labourers were quite content to remain on the minimum wage—in some cases I found that they had agreed to the penal wage for days together—and no enfeeblement of health resulted.

I would allow labourers to earn something in addition to the normal wage on performance of a task in excess of the normal. Work should be stopped on Sunday, and payment made at the carrier-wage to both diggers and carriers, in the case of all persons who have been on the work since the Friday preceding.

One other matter to which I would again refer is the size of the charge. I have already mentioned that in my opinion 3,000 is about as large a number as can be thoroughly controlled in one camp.

V.—Other details of management.

(c)—*Gratuitous Relief.*

The provisions of the Code were generally followed with regard to gratuitous relief and poor-houses.

148—171. With regard to village relief, I would remark that steps should be taken at the outset to have this thoroughly organized. For this purpose the strengthening of the Revenue Inspecting Agency is necessary, and this should on a future occasion be at once ordered.

I note that in one question, No. 164, a reference is made to the substitution of central kitchens for gratuitous relief given in the shape of money doles at the houses of the people. I do not think that kitchens could altogether take the place of village-relief. In the present famine children's kitchens were established after the commencement of the rains. These did a very great amount of good, but had any attempt been made to feed the adults who were at the time in receipt of village-relief, arrangements would have had to be made on a scale which would have been unmanageable.

Relief was given in the form of money to the people at their homes. Grain doles were not tried. I would maintain the arrangements, which worked on the whole satisfactorily in the present famine. Payments were made through the village patwari and mukaddam. At first, daily payments by the village mukaddam were in force, but when the advent of the rains made it difficult to get regular supplies of money tent to outlying parts, a system of payment monthly in advance was introduced. I would have monthly payments adopted on a future occasion. Much trouble in the keeping of accounts and in the supply of money is saved in this way. I do not consider that there was in this district any general tendency among paupers to squander the money thus advanced to them. Cases of reckless spending of the dole were now and again brought to notice, but so were cases where the pauper had actually sometimes managed to save something out of the dole.

(d)—*Poor-Houses.*

172—184. With regard to poor-houses I have no suggestions to make. In this district we experienced much difficulty in their management, because of the large number of starving wanderers from outside the district, who constantly resorted to the poor-houses. With persons of our own district it was always possible to deal. They could be sent to their homes when able to travel, and put on village-relief. But this could not be done with inhabitants of the Native States. Deportation was tried; but this was not of much avail, as the people generally managed to come back. If sent to works, these wanderers hardly ever stay; they again go about begging, get still more enfeebled, and are brought back to the poor-houses. I hardly see that there is any remedy for this state of matters, with all our northern and eastern border surrounded by Native States.

(e)—*Relief Kitchens.*

193—198. These were established on all large works, and from the commencement of July, children's kitchens were started in central villages all over the affected part of the district. I think it is a good plan on works to give cooked food to non-working children and dependants of labourers. When money doles were given, the number of dependants and hangers-on was always considerable, and it is as well to have relief-camps encumbered by as few of these persons as possible.

At the village kitchens no attempt should ordinarily be made to feed other than children. It is impossible for kitchens to entirely supersede village-relief. At the commencement of a famine, kitchens might be a useful test of the pressure of scarcity, and they might be set going when such pressure is suspected. But as soon as the test has shewn that relief on a large scale is necessary, village-relief should be introduced for adult paupers. In the present famine it has been the general experience that people receiving money on village-relief could not be trusted to expend it on their children. I am strongly in favour, therefore, of kitchens being extensively established for the feeding of pauper children. The measure was productive of very great good in this district, it was very popular with the people, and the management of the kitchens was generally very well done by the police, village headmen and schoolmasters.

The above remarks sum up what I have to say regarding departures from the provisions of the Code, and contain such suggestions as I can make, in the time at my disposal, for future working.

(*President*).—When did you become Deputy Commissioner of Jabalpur?—On the 14th of March 1897.

Before that were you on leave or in any other district?—I had gone on leave on the 13th of August 1896. I had been four months in Jabalpur in 1896.

What was the state of the district when you went on leave in 1896 in your opinion?—I think the people were not showing signs of absolute famine, but they were distinctly hard up and wanted something to do. In March we arranged to start some works which would go on till the agricultural season came round in June. The whole thing had been really settled at a Conference held on the 5th of March 1896 which laid down what general lines we were to follow.

What kind of works?—Small road works and tank works. We paid the men five pice and the women four pice. There was no real task or gang system.

The wages were considerably lower than the ordinary rates, were they not?—Yes.

Did the people come to the works?—I think we had between 8,000 and 10,000 on the works in May 1896.

When were these works stopped?—They went on till the rains, but at that time they slackened off altogether and the people went back to the fields. I went home on the 13th of August 1896. On the 16th of August rain fell heavily, and the idea then was that everything was over and that prospects were splendid, but by the middle of August the numbers on relief works had again run up.

Were the seasons of 1895-96 very bad?—I was not in the district.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—From your answer to questions 57 and 59 you apparently consider there is some scope for tank works in this district?—Yes, in certain places. In the low-lying land.

Could it be done by embanking?—Embanking would be of great benefit. You can make very little use of it in the low-lying country, but elsewhere there is considerable scope for these measures.

Would you want artificial irrigation in the north?—No, they have bunds.

Are the tanks you have in your mind large works?—No, not as a rule. Simply big village tanks.

You think that if proper investigation were made a good scheme for such tanks could be prepared?—I think so. Last week I went through Sehora, and there was a large tank there which I enquired about. I ascertained that from that tank five villages could be watered if it were deepened and a channel made.

Could tanks of this sort be made by means of advances?—Many of the village landlords are scarcely substantial enough in the affected area. Ordinarily there are not sufficient malguzars.

Such works you think would be preferable to going on with roads?—I think so generally.

If you opened relief works you would begin with large tanks, would you, or small village works?—I think where I could organise relief works I would begin with large works. In remote corners I should have small village works.

Would you like to keep small works in the back-ground?—Yes, as a reserve.

You think it an advantage to begin relief work on big works?—Yes.

Although it might involve taking labour some distance?—Yes. I should have some small local works also.

How far do you consider large Public Works would draw labour?—Five or six miles.

Did you leave the district when the system of piece-work was introduced?—No, piece-work was introduced in the middle of May 1897.

How was it done, by contractors?—There were no contractors. It was really grafted to the old task-work system. Gangs remained as they were.

The head of the gang was paid, I suppose?—Yes.

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But contractors were not employed?—No.

Can you give me a rough idea of the proportion on piece-work and task-work?—The proportion varied from week to week.

Which predominated?—Piece-work when it was introduced.

Was there any difficulty in employing task workers?—No. Task-workers can always be employed on earth-work.

As you went on did the proportion differ?—I thought the rates on piece-work were not favourable enough. I think they were above the Public Works Department rate, but considering the prices prevailing they were not sufficiently liberal.

Did they raise the rates afterwards?—Yes, on my remonstrating, but meanwhile many people had gone away.

Did they come back again?—Some did.

Could they have gone on to task-work?—They were not allowed to go there, being able-bodied.

Did the weak people go?—The weak people were kept on task-work. They didn't leave the work.

You think the only fault of piece-work was that the rates are not sufficient?—I think so. And I also think that people had been demoralised by having had an easy time on task-work.

As a matter of fact, do you think the piece-work was well done?—Yes, I think so. The impression I formed was that in April many on work did not require relief at all.

Did it come to your notice that any of the people were earning an excessive wage?—Yes, on one of the roads near Jubbulpore.

Was there a large number earning too much?—I should think almost quite half were earning too much.

What do you consider too much?—Sometimes double the D wage.

When you introduced piece-work, what was done with the dependants?—They were put on gratuitous relief.

What did you do with task-worker's dependants?—A certain number were fed.

Was there any difficulty in distinguishing between the two different kinds of dependants?—No.

Was there any difficulty in keeping the two sets distinct?—I don't think so. As a matter of fact, the dependants of task-workers were more or less cripples or infirm.

I understand you would put able-bodied labourers on piece-work with a limited wage?—Yes.

And the weak you would put on task-work and support the children and dependants?—Yes.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Turning to your note regarding relief centres, I understand these relief centres were a temporary expedient?—Yes.

You say in reply to question No. 189 that it would have been better in every way to have opened regular relief-works, and to have completed village relief arrangements at an earlier date?—I think so certainly in every way.

The preparations were not sufficiently ahead?—No.

When did the death-rate attract attention before you came to the district?—Yes.

Was it bad in October, November, and December 1896?—The figures are as follows:—

	Murwara.	Jubbulpore.
October 1896 . . .	7·57	7·39
November ,, . . .	5·88	5·05
December ,, . . .	6 25	4·90
January 1897 . . .	10·62	6·90
February ,, . . .	16·45	6·94

What was the cause of these very high rates?—There was no doubt that the people had got into very low condition. At that time deaths in poor-houses had risen to a very great extent.

When did relief measures get into full swing?—Village relief began about the end of February.

Meanwhile these relief centres were going on?—Yes, and public works began in January, but it was probably February before they were thoroughly organized.

Did you find your circle inspectors had been increased when you came to the District?—Yes, in the middle of March.

In a similar future famine should a commencement be made earlier?—I should think four to five months earlier.

When public works were fully organized, were there a sufficient number of works open in all parts of the District?—I think a sufficient number were opened in the District as a whole, but they were badly distributed. On the 28th March 1897 the Commissioner and Executive Engineer met me at Katni and we re-arranged the distribution. People came to the central line of works which was opened, but they would not go to the outlying parts.

Did you eventually put that right?—At the meeting of 28th March 1897 we re-arranged the distribution, and that had a very useful result in spreading relief over the affected area.

Did you get a good number of people on relief?—Yes.

In the Murwara Tahsil had you a sufficient number of relief works?—Yes, by the middle of the operations.

Up to that time?—I think not, they were not properly distributed. There were three works near Murwara which did not draw labourers from outlying parts.

Was gratuitous relief fully organized in March?—Yes.

Were the numbers considerable?—Yes, especially in Murwara.

Did the result of this re-arrangement of works bring down the death-rate?—Yes, at once.

Were the regular public works supplemented by Civil Agency works?—Yes, a number of Civil Agency works arose.

How did you work them?—They were not very satisfactorily worked. The difficulty was to find men to supervise. In Murwara they were fairly well managed as I had European supervision, two Staff Corps Officers, a Forest Officer and an Assistant Commissioner.

Were they conducted directly by Government?—Yes.

What was the wage paid?—The Code wage. They were village tank works.

Were there not works conducted by malguzars from Land Improvement Act loans?—Yes.

Could you have extended that system?—It was with very great difficulty that we got malguzars to take loans.

So matters went on till May, when you say piece-work was introduced, and that the people had become demoralized. How do you mean?—Task work was very light. On one work three-fourths of the people had finished their work by 12 o'clock in the day and some proportion of these were people not in need of relief.

How did you judge that?—I went through the villages and found everybody almost on the works. On enquiry as to where all the inhabitants had gone, you were told that people had gone on to the works to get money.

Could not that demoralization have been checked by enforcing a task?—I think with a smaller relief charge and a better type of officers and thoroughly good supervision, things might have been better done.

The wage was not too high. Was it?—No.

The effect of payment by results was to clear the works. Was it not?—Yes, but they were cleared too much, it was too stringent.

Do you think it is a reasonable test that a man who had to work should not get more than the D wage?—It is a very strict test. Of course the difficulty is when works get flooded with people who should not be there.

As regards the particular limitation of the D wage?—It might be possible to do away with the limit. We did not give piece-work a really fair trial. It might be possible to really work it without any limit of wage if this were done from the very commencement.

During the rains you increased your village relief. Did you not?—Yes.

And you increased your circle inspectors?—Yes.

How did the death-rate remain?—It remained low till July, then it rose in August and September.

Were there any special enquiries about the cause of mortality?—Yes.

What was the result?—There was a considerable consensus of opinion that a very great proportion was due to an intensely feverish year. I made enquiries in the Haveli portion and there was no doubt about it.

You say famine was not declared there?—No.

Do you think that high prices might not have had some effect on the high death-rate?—Perhaps; at the time the impression I formed was that in the low-lying district the death-rate was certainly not to be attributed to the effects of the famine.

In Murwara, as distinct from Jubbulpore, did you lay great stress on gratuitous relief?—Yes.

Near the hills?—Yes.

Did Gonds and Kols come to the works during fair weather?—Yes, when we had the works sufficiently near. The Kols are nearly always ready to come, but the Gonds will not generally come.

As to relief kitchens, when were they established on a large scale apart from the works?—In July when the rains set in.

Was that in pursuance of any preconceived idea or was it because emaciation increased among the children?—Because signs of emaciation were very distinct.

Did children come without their mothers?—Yes.

Did they have two meals a day or one?—As a rule they ate once and were allowed to take away something.

Did they improve in health in consequence?—Very distinctly.

Would you start kitchens at an early stage of the famine?—I think I should start them early with the experience I have had.

Had you difficulty in getting trustworthy managers to manage the kitchens?—No.

Would you work them side by side with gratuitous relief?—Yes.

(*President.*)—Is it not a fact that living on the relief works in the monsoon rains is more or less dangerous to health in Jubbulpore?—A great deal depends upon the state of the labourers. I should think a healthy labourer, with a fair amount of hutting, would not suffer, but a feeble labourer would, and children would certainly.

I suppose it is important that ' nants and farm labourers should be in their villages ready to do agricultural work when the rains come on?—Yes.

In a famine year how are they to live in their villages and carry on works if they are not allowed to earn more than a bare subsistence?—That is rather a difficulty. This year they had considerably more; they earned much more than a subsistence wage.

Do you think they earned that because they had some other resources of food?—In this district they had to a very large extent an excellent food from the mahua crop. The females and children of the agricultural labourers go to works, and the consolidated pay of the family was very considerable. If we strictly limited them to subsistence wage in this district, there might be a difficulty during the rains.

In your answer to questions 71—83 you say in this district it was generally found that people, outside the class of general labourers, were unwilling to leave their homes. Mr. Maw, who was also in this district, mentions the same fact, and explains that these people on returning would often find that they had lost their holdings. Do you think that a true explanation as to the cause of the reluctance?—No, I should not.

You don't think they would have lost their houses?—No, I don't think so.

In a year like this do you think the care of cattle would make them specially reluctant to go?—Of course certain people might not go on that account. The people won't leave their villages; they prefer to stay at home.

Do you think, comparing their case with the landless labouring class, they have a more reasonable objection to work at a distant work and leave their villages?—I should say the landless labouring class is accustomed to wander about in search of work, while the agricultural labourer stays at home and does not as a rule emigrate, at any rate, to the same extent.

Do you think it would be possible with a strong staff of circle officers and circle inspectors to reserve certain small works in each circle for persons of the tenant and farm labouring class, and then to send the landlesss labouring class to the Public Works Department works?—It might be with a thoroughly good circle agency, but it would be rather difficult to manage it.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Would it be possible to arrange it by fixing a low rate of pay for the village works and a better rate for works at a distance?—Yes, that might answer.

(*President.*)—Have you studied the question of the adequacy of the minimum wage?—No, I cannot say that I have gone into it fully or calculated all the *pros* and *cons*. I have noticed from experience that the D wage seemed suited to the people in this district. They seemed to flourish very highly and continued to work for months on it. The combined family wage was considered a good one.

Was there not also mahua and other things available?—Yes.

And there is the fact that many of the labourers ate the cattle that died?—Of course there is a good deal of that; the flesh would be eaten, but generally the hide is considered the valuable part of the animal.

So it is very difficult to judge whether the wage is a good one or not if there are any other factors?—Most of the officers here thought the D wage sufficient. Of course other things should be considered.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—If the people were below par it would not bring them up, would it?—No.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—Is it not a fact that the great mass of the people was receiving no more than the D wage?—Yes.

Did they spend the whole of the wage?—No.

What became of the money?—I don't know, because it is only now coming back.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—They did not live on the D wage?—They kept a considerable portion of the money.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—Is it not a fact that the distress was limited in extent here?—Yes.

(*President.*)—There had been three or four years of bad harvests?—In certain parts. The district is divided into rice and wheat-growing country. The rice-growing portion had suffered.

And prices were double the ordinary during a famine year. Were they not?—Yes.

When petty cultivators had for some years been getting bad harvests and when prices were at double the ordinary rates, there must have been many in very great need?—There was a certain proportion who were not in such need. They had small reserves.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—As regards the cold weather death-rate. Was there a large emigration into the district from Rewa?—Yes.

Did the emigration contribute largely to the poor-houses?—Yes, very greatly; over three-fourths was from the surrounding territory of Rewa.

As a matter of fact, was there a considerable number of Rewa people in the large poor-houses?—Yes, that was so.

And the mortality at the poor-houses was very heavy?—Yes.

They came in considerable numbers to Murwara. Did they not?—Yes.

Would not a large number of works be necessary in order to provide work for the people?—Yes.

Tank works could be increased. Could they not?—Yes.

As regards rates, would it not be very complicated to have a large number of rates?—Yes, and it would open the door to fraud.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—Your D wage is calculated on the price of wheat. Is it not?—Yes, chiefly.

Was there any cheaper grain to live upon?—*Kodo.*

In that way could they save out of the D wage?—With the D wage they bought inferior rice in the bunnias' shops.

So they had inferior rice and kodo?—Yes. They also had kutki available.

Was there American grain of various kinds?—Yes.

What kinds?—Maize, a species of bean and rye.

Can you say how much?—12,000 maunds. I got 8,000 for this district and 4,000 was sent to the Mandla District.

Did the people readily take up this maize?—Yes, very readily.

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You had a substantial grant from the Charitable Relief Fund ?—Yes, R4,44,000.

How much did you spend on agriculturists ?—R3,67,000.

You had a subsequent grant. Had you not ?—Yes, R15,000.

Can you say what was the area sown with aid of this kind ?—It was a very considerable area.

Was your crop area during 1897 as large as the ordinary crop area ?—No. There was a falling off. In 1895-96 it was 505,000, in 1896-97 it was 499,000, and this year 490,000.

What was the amount advanced as agricultural loans ?—One and-a-half lakhs.

As regards tenants being absent from their homes. If a tenant were found absent from his holding, would not the malguzar put some one else in his place ?—That is very seldom done.

Did you take special measures to prevent it ?—Yes.

I suppose if no special measures had been taken there would have been a risk ?—Yes, there would be a risk, but as a rule the relief officer always arranged that matter.

Still it would work on the tenants' mind ?—It might.

As regards the dwelling house of the tenant, I suppose it was generally a hut ?—Yes.

And I suppose if it were not looked after for some months, it would be likely to fall down ?—Yes.

Then the land reverts to the malguzar ?—Yes.

Then the tenant runs that risk too ?—I don't think the malguzar would be so hard on him in a year of general calamity.

Still he would have to rebuild his house ?—There is no reason why it should fall down in a short time.

In the higher part of the district where rice is grown, that is the only crop. Did the people depend entirely on the kharif ?—Yes.

If that fails there is bound to be distress ?—Yes.

(*President.*)—Are there many weavers in Jabalpur ?—No, not as a weaver class.

Most of the weavers are labourers, I suppose ?—Yes, and the weaving is a second string to their bow.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—A cheap grain shop was started. Do you approve of it ?—Yes, I think it was well managed and did a very considerable amount of good. I think it is a good way of spending charity money.

It did not in any way interfere with private trade ?—No. I had no complaints of it.

At the Commissioner's Court, Jabalpur.

THIRTY-FOURTH DAY.

Tuesday, 15th March 1898.

PRESENT:

SIR J. B. LYALL, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I. (PRESIDENT).
SURGEON-COLONEL J. RICHARDSON.
MR. T. W. HOLDERNESS, C.S.I.
MR. T. HIGHAM, C.I.E.
RAI BAHADUR B. K. BOSE, C.I.E.
MR. J. B. FULLER, C.I.E. (*Temporary Member for the Central Provinces*).
MR. H. J. MCINTOSH, *Secretary*.

MR. E. E. OLIVER, Chief Engineer and Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces, Public Works Department, called in and examined.

Mr. E. E. Oliver.

15th Mar. 1898.

I put in written answers to the Commission's questions.

* 50. The total number of Charges were :—

	Under Public Works Department.	Under Civil Officers.	Total.
(*a*) Roads	172	45	217
(*b*) Village tanks	*Nil*	48	48
(*c*) Impounding reservoirs	5	*Nil*	5
(*d*) Canals	*Nil*	,,	*Nil*
(*e*) Railways or tramways	1	,,	1
(*f*) Miscellaneous works	*Nil*	10	10
TOTAL	178	103	281

The position of these is shown on the maps attached to District statements, and the dates of opening and closing in each case are given in column 3.

51. The total length of the new roads constructed or raised in class is as follows :—

Description.	Unmetalled.	Metalled or Muramed.	Total.
	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.
New roads	150	429	579
Roads raised in class	127	692	819
GRAND TOTAL	277	1,121	1,398

52. The average number of day-units that were provided for on each class of road-work during the recent Central Provinces relief operations. In practice it was found that the actual exceeded the estimated numbers, due presumably to the dependants and non-workers who were counted as provided for against the work. Taking all these dependants and non-workers into account for—

I.—Earth work only—

	Day-units per mile.†
An average of 54 roads raised in class gave	13,400
27 estimates for earthwork in construction of ordinary roads, allowing 14 cubic feet per day-unit, which was found to be the average throughout the recent operations	19,200
But there were actually employed on these	27,600
On harder *muram* soil with occasional boulders	39,500
On certain *ghat* roads	68,000

II.—Metalling—

A 9" coat of metal for a 12 feet width requires per mile 47,520 cubic feet. If required for a new road, a part would be soling, and in some soils a greater thickness would be needed. This 9" might be taken as lasting five years, after which a 4½" coat might be assumed as required for every additional five years. During the recent operations the average metal broken per day-unit of all classes throughout these Provinces was 1·8 cubic feet. Therefore this would afford employment for 26,400 day-units per mile on a new road, and half that number for collecting a 4½" coat on an existing road.

A reasonable average for the quarrying, carting and consolidating of this metal was found to be R2,000 per mile.

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.
†*Vide* details given in Appendices B and C, Famine Report, P. W. D. Section.

This generally had to be done by contract, but if done by famine labour, and taking the average number of day-units relieved per rupee at 9, the average to which statements work out, this would provide work for an additional 18,000 day-units per mile.

For a 9″ coat of *muram* on a similar road the quantity required would be as above, 47,520 cubic feet. The rate for collecting, spreading, and consolidating may be approximately put at R2 per 00 cubic feet, or R950 per mile, and taking the average number of day-units relieved per rupee at 9, would equal 9×950 or, say, 9,000 day-units per mile. The life of *muram* is not so good as metal, and will vary greatly according to quality. The 9″ coat might be taken as good for four years, and an additional 6″ every 4 subsequent years would equal 6,000 day-units.

It must be borne in mind that the numbers would vary widely with the section of the road, the district, the condition of the people and other factors, and that at best an approximation only is possible, but roughly put this might be as follows :—

Description of Road-work.	Day-units per mile.		
	Unmetalled.	Metalled.	*Muramed.*
ordinary new *ghat* road with five years' life for metal.	68,000	112,000	77,000
New road in plain country, but with occasional stiff bits, with metal for five years.	39,000	84,000	49,000
New road in plain country, but with ordinary earthwork and metal for five years.	28,000	72,000	37,000
Old roads raised in class, *viz.*, earthen banks made up and metalled or *muramed* to last five years.	13,000	57,000	22,000
4½″ renewal coat of metal, good for five years.	...	22,000	...
6″ renewal coat of *muram*, good for four years.	...	...	6,000

The figures for quarrying, carting, and consolidating have been included under metalling, so that in practice these would probably be found too high, but taken as they stand, it will be seen that the earthwork on an ordinary new road would barely provide a Charge of 5,000 relief-workers with employment for six days per mile.

53. In regard to the roads constructed or improved as relief-works, it may be said that, with some insignificant exceptions, they will all be of great permanent value to these Provinces. The most of them were selected for construction on account of their utility, and had been entered in the District Road Scheme as part of the programme of desirable Public Works. Detailed remarks giving the opinions of Commissioners and Public Works Officers will be found in the district statements for each road undertaken. Among the more important may be mentioned, in the Jubbulpore Division, an excellent *ghat* constructed on the Patan-Tendukhera road up to the Damoh Plateau, and much useful work done on a continuation of the same alignment between Rehli and Saugor. This only needs the carrying out of short lines to furnish a direct line of communication between Jabalpore and Saugor. In Damoh the Damoh-Batiagarh and the Hatta-Gaisabad lines were much needed roads, and the latter opens out the northern corner of the district to wheeled traffic. Similarly the road from Bina Railway Station to Malthon and on to Jhansi will open out the northern corner of the Saugor District. The road from Lakhnadon, in the Seoni District, eastward to Kahani-Kedarpur will, when completed, open out another tract hitherto inaccessible to wheeled traffic, while that from Lakhnadon westward to Narsinghpur connects two important centres.

In the Nerbudda Division no more useful work could have been put in hand than the Narsingpur-Chhindwara Road, which when completed will not merely link up two important districts previously cut off by an impracticable *ghat*, but, as the Commissioner writes, "is a great boon to the inhabitants of Chhindwara. It opens communication with the Nerbudda valley, affording an outlet for produce and an inlet for trade. It is also a famine protective work, as it enables grain to be brought in from Narsinghpur. It will help to open up the *jagirs* and will increase the value of land in its neighbourhood. It would be difficult to find a work of greater public utility or of more enduring benefit." Further west along the Plateau the Piparia-Matkuli-Chhindwara road has been practically raised to a first class road throughout, and puts the head-quarters of the last-named district in touch with the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. The Betul-Ellichpur road opens out an important trade route with the Berars, and the Betul-Harda road will ultimately link the district head-quarters with a second point on the Railway. The value of the short feeder lines at right angles to the Railway, which had to be undertaken to provide immediate employment for labour in the Nerbudda valley, is somewhat discounted by the difficulty of finding suitable material to make up a hard surface ; but of these the Gadarwara-Sainkhera, the Narsinghpur-Sankal and the Harda-Handia are exceptionally valuable railway feeders. In the Nagpur Division the Balaghat-Baihar *ghat* road will, when complete, afford a much needed outlet for the produce of the Baihar Tahsil, and the roads from Balaghat by Lanji and on to Amgaon Railway station and from Lalbarra on the Balaghat-Seoni road to Tumsur Railway Station connect rich rice tracts with the Bengal-Nagpur Railway system.

In the Chhattisgarh Division, from the last-named Railway system, the Rajnandgaon-Antagarh and the Drug-Balod on the south, while to the north the Drug-Dhamda-Bametara, the Dhamda-Gandai, the Tilda-Simga up to the borders of the Kawardha State, the Bhatapara-Laun-Pauni, the Bhatapara-Mungeli and the Kota-Lormi up to the Pandaria State, with sundry shorter lengths, are all valuable railway feeders, and will do much to develope this fine grain tract. They have not all been completed, but much useful work has been done, and as funds permit the remaining work will be gradually taken in hand.

Some of these require additional masonry works before they can be classed as thoroughly useful roads, but there is every hope that within a few years these can gradually be carried out from the ordinary Provincial Public Works grant, and so long as funds can be made available for their repairs and up-keep there can be no question of their very great permanent value. It may therefore be confidently said that a very considerable portion of the expenditure incurred on these relief-works will materially contribute towards the prosperity and the further development of the Central Provinces, and, in the most literal sense, furnish additional protection against famine in the future.

54. I have in the Public Works section of the Central Provinces Famine Report referred to this question so far as these Provinces are concerned, and in regard to what seemed possible at the outset (in October 1896) and what was done I would invite a reference to paragraph 4 of that Report.

In addition to the construction of new and the improvement and maintenance of old roads and of tanks, it is difficult to suggest much that can safely be added to a programme for the future. A certain number of new roads are still required to open out parts of the Central Provinces, though these are limited and mainly in the sparsely populated tracts. Under good supervision it is possible to tell off gangs of famine labourers to do the work of maintaining existing roads, to collect metal and *muram*, spread and consolidate the latter. Such labour might also be utilized on bringing up to formation level, banks and cuttings for some of the new railways now being surveyed, though it would have to be supplemented by skilled workmen, and it may be questioned if some of the lines proposed would be subsequently remunerative.

One other form of employment seems worthy of more consideration, *viz.*, besides the construction of village tanks and bunds for the storage of water, the employment of gangs for the improvement of estates, such as the clearing of jungle from waste lands, the construction of field bunds and the rendering such lands fit for cultivation and irrigation. It may be urged that in most cases this would be more the business of small proprietors or village headmen than of Government, but the latter should in the end be able to get back increased revenue. It is a work well suited to a large class of the population, the people are accustomed to it, and such employment would seem preferable to their exclusive employment on roads which are not wanted and for which there are not likely to be funds to properly maintain.

It is impossible to form any useful estimate of new roads that could be properly undertaken in addition to those already finished or commenced.

It will hardly be disputed that it is more profitable to employ famine labour upon really useful works, even though this involves some additional cost for materials or the carriage of materials, than upon works the utility of which is very questionable. Thus, it is better to employ

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the labour upon metal breaking on an important existing line of communication than to start desultory works on new extensions. Something may of course have to be paid for carting and for skilled labour for consolidation, but the classes employed on both the latter equally feel the pinch of high prices during a season of scarcity. If it is assumed that labour can be moved even moderate distances, it can generally be moved to selected works of this class. Further, it can hardly be disputed that the supervision of a few large camps must in every way be more thorough and satisfactory than is possible for many small ones.

55. This is dealt with in the answers to Questions 52 and 54.

56. No.

57. Village tanks afford a useful but dangerous form of village relief-works. They afford no test as to the measure of distress, but at the same time they are in most cases a permanent benefit to the adjoining village.

58. None under the Public Works Department; the figures for those carried out under Civil agency are as follows;—

Total number of Village tanks	...	101
„ „ „ day-units	...	4·3 millions.

59. The number of day-units that can be employed must obviously depend on the size of the tank. The only figures I have before me vary from 160 to 250 daily.

I can only suggest a strict system of piece-work, and the raising of the task if it is found that too large a proportion of the village population come on to the work.

60. It would still be possible to make more village tanks, but I think they could not be relied on to provide employment for large numbers.

61. The impounding reservoirs or tanks undertaken by the Public Works Department were insignificant in number and size. There were a few in the Chhattisgarh Feudatory States and zamindaris, and some 8 or 10 in the Baihar Tahsil of the Balaghat District. The particulars available are given in the District statements, the total expenditure appears to have been under R50,000; only one or two can be said to be completed, and masonry regulators will probably be needed in all cases where it is proposed to use the water for irrigation.

62. In some districts of these Provinces, impounding reservoirs with irrigation works in connection could certainly be constructed, and would so far be an additional protection against famine, but this would be the case only to a limited extent and mainly in the districts least likely to require relief. The amount of protection afforded would be very small in comparison with the cost of such works.

63. The possibility of providing employment on the construction, enlargement or repair of irrigating or storage tanks in these provinces was not overlooked. A circular* was issued in communication with the Commissioner of Settlements and Agriculture asking for suggestions as to any possible works of this class. A well-considered scheme, reviewing in advance a series of possible projects, would be very valuable, though it seems doubtful if, in most districts of the Central Provinces, tanks would ever furnish any large amount of suitable employment for famine relief workers. In response to the call, a very insignificant number only were found possible at the time, and practically none in the tracts where relief-works were then most urgently called for.

64, 65, 66. None.

67. There are a few such projects dating back mainly from Sir Richard Temple's time, in the Public Works Secretariat Office, but I doubt if any of them are financially sound, even to the extent of providing for the ordinary maintenance by any increase of revenue that would be due to them. Some are associated with proposals for navigation of the larger rivers. Most of them would certainly be costly, would provide little if any suitable work for famine labour and would involve heavy masonry works. They can only be dealt with in the same way as other irrigation proposals and judged after a careful consideration of their financial aspects. It must be remembered that much of the land in the Central Provinces is liable to suffer as much from excess of moisture as from drought, that a great deal of the black cotton soil tract is not well adapted for irrigation, the rivers and their tributaries are mainly in deep beds and impounding dams would be very costly, that when the water has been impounded there are few large plains over which it could be conveyed in canals, that few of the streams deserve to be called perennial, and that the supply of water would be likely to fail in the years of drought. I noticed some proposals made from time to time by individuals who go on the abstract idea that irrigation in very dry years is an excellent thing, but I am not aware of any of these that look hopeful when they come to be professionally examined and judged by ordinary financial standards.

68. The only work of the kind was a short length of the embankment for the Raipur-Dhamtari tramway, and the arrangement was that the work done by famine labour under Provincial Public Works Department was to be paid for by the Bengal-Nagpur Railway Company at ordinary contract rates.

69. The conclusions that may be drawn from the experience gained during the last year's famine operations will probably vary with the standpoint taken up, but the importance of having always ready a programme of large useful works that might at any time be put in hand is undoubted. The statements A and B, referred to in paragraph 6 of Famine Report, Public Works Department Section, were found invaluable and, so far as they had been worked out, enabled operations to be commenced with confidence and the knowledge that money would not be actually wasted. If sufficient care is taken there should be no great difficulty in keeping such statements up, and adding from time to time works in the place of those struck out as completed. The maintenance of metalled and *muramed* roads is a yearly recurring necessity, and that a great deal can be done in this way by famine labour has been amply proved. See also reply to question No. 54.

70. See Central Provinces Famine Code, paragraphs 6 to 9, pages 3 to 6.

On the 20th October 1896† a call was made upon Executive Engineers to submit, in communication with Commissioners of Divisions, statements showing the roads or other works considered the most suitable to be carried out as relief-works under the Public Works Department, whether for new roads, the raising of existing ones in class, the collection of *muram* and metal, the breaking of the latter, and such tanks, etc., as would come under the Famine Code classification of "large works." These to be divided as follows:—"Statement A," works which can be undertaken in the event of serious or prolonged famine, but for which estimates and possibly surveys may not be ready; "Statement B," works to be undertaken at once in the nearest approximation to order of urgency for each district, and requiring estimates to be submitted with the least possible delay. These statements were printed off with notes and instructions for each Civil Division as fast as received, additional works being brought forward from time to time into Statements B, which as issued were held to be the Administrative sanctions for proceeding with the different works. The estimates were all prepared and were all sanctioned at the ordinary Public Works rates, increased allotments being given where necessary to cover the difference between these rates and the cost of work carried out by famine labour. In the first instance some of these were little more than approximate mileage rates, for it was occasionally necessary to provide promptly for the employment of labour in badly affected tracts, and the surveys and estimates had to proceed *pari passu* with the setting out of the work, though in all cases orders were issued to follow this as quickly as possible with Stage I estimates. It will be obvious that, with so much on their hands, officers found very great difficulty in complying with these orders, but it is satisfactory to be able to add that regular estimates for all the relief-works commenced have been duly submitted, checked and sanctioned in proper form.

A copy of the final Statements A and B for the four Civil Divisions is given as Appendix A to Famine Report, Public Works Department Section, columns being added showing the amount of estimates sanctioned and funds allotted. Figures are being worked out to show what it will cost to finally complete all the works commenced but left unfinished, and to supply the masonry works needed. A scheme will then be drawn up for finishing the most important of these gradually from Provincial and Local Funds. Some idea of the labour involved in the preparation and check of these estimates may be obtained from the figures which aggregate R1,07,00,000 against an expenditure of R85,77,429.

*Public Works No. 272—6756, dated the 27th October 1896.
† Public Works No. 360—8—J. N., dated 20th October 1896.

71. See remarks under question No. 54.

There seems to me much force in the conclusions in paragraph 29 of Mr. Higham's report on the management of famine relief-work, and I consider that the movement of relief workers and their dependants to suitable sites for useful employment must be accepted as a necessity in the case of future famines, and that with reasonable precautions there should be no difficulty in doing this. The view that people would rather die in their own villages than go to a distant work is one of the bogies that may occasionally have stood in the way of making the attempt, but it is hardly borne out by facts, and, I venture to maintain, should not be admitted as an excuse on the part of the famine-stricken. People who are in danger of dying from starvation must accept some inconvenience to obtain the relief offered. Such is the case in all countries, and if the Indian villager is, in the first instance, firmly told it is the order of Government he is not to die, but to go to the work provided for him, he will go readily enough. Experience shows that in many cases the native only waits for such an order and is glad to have it. Large bodies of labourers with their families and petty belongings are being constantly moved to distant works, and any reliable contractor would undertake to do this without hardship to the people concerned. In the end it is infinitely better for them to be so moved. Sanitation, water-supply, hutting or shelter, food-supply and regular payments can be ensured, and while the supervision of a camp of 5,000 may be excellent, that for 10 camps of 500 each becomes almost impossible. Works cannot be provided close to each village, and the going backwards and forwards of the people many miles each day renders effective medical or other supervision almost impossible. During these daily movements they often drink from contaminated pools, and this was, I believe, a fruitful source of epidemic disease during the recent Central Provinces famine.

During the recent famine large bodies of relief-workers were, within my knowledge, successfully moved by road nearly 40 miles (Bunkheri to Delkheri, 36 miles), and if they have to be moved as far as this, making return to their villages every day impossible, there seems to be no good reason why they should not be moved any distance in reason, say to metal-breaking on the main lines of communication. For anything over a day's march carriage for women and children and dependants would have to be provided and of course suitable hutting on the works themselves.

People who cannot be moved moderate distances like this would appear to be hardly suitable for employment on Public Works Relief operations.

72. I consider that relief should certainly be withheld from able-bodied labourers who refuse under the conditions set forth above to go these moderate distances to work.

73. The conveyance of ordinary relief-workers distances over 100 miles would seldom be necessary, but for the able-bodied and their families even this would be preferable to employing them on useless works.

74. I should say that by far the greater number have resided on the works.

75. It was not made a definite condition of relief. Where works were more than a few miles from a village the people could not go backwards and forwards daily. In many cases, however, as work on a road was moved away from a village, the workers coming from it fell off, while others from the next village came on.

76. I am in favour of making residence on works obligatory as a rule. See reply to the last question. A low rate of wages is not in itself a sufficient test.

77. Not as a rule, but allowance must be made for the reluctance of people who have never moved far away from home to go any long distance. When once they have made the move, they seem to take kindly to the new arrangements quickly enough. Tact and firmness on the part of the responsible authorities is the most important factor.

78. Such an arrangement would be perfectly impossible.

79. No reductions have been authorized for such "distance," but see Section 6 of General Order No. 495 of 16th December 1896.

80. The cost per day-unit for hutting, tools and other miscellaneous charges was about 5 pies. For hutting only, probably 3 pies.

81. They were as a rule better off in the relief-camps than anywhere else, but more blankets at the end of the rains would have been useful.

82. Blankets and bedding were as a rule only issued for the field hospitals.

83. Works under the Public Works Department were as a rule fairly large and the proportion of dependants varied considerably from various causes. I am not aware of any great difference in the proportion that could properly be marked off against large and small works.

84. The proportion of labourers employed on task-work and piece-work respectively varied from 280 to 1 maximum in Damoh, where the relief-workers were generally very feeble and had to be employed on light task-work, to 4 to 1 in Betul. The average proportion for the Province is 15 to 1.

85—87. With reference to the questions asked under section III, task and piece-work, I give below, first, an extract from my report on the recent famine operations dealing with this subject, and second, an extract from my note on Mr. Higham's Report.

Extract, paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12, of Central Provinces Famine Report, Public Works Department Section.

Piece-work orders issued.

9. In addition to the above a note was drawn up by the Chief Engineer in January 1897* on the introduction of piece-work with a proposed form of conditions. After certain correspondence with the Government of India in regard to the proposal, orders were issued authorizing its introduction under certain restrictions. These will be found in the following:—

General Order No. 355-357-A, dated the 15th May 1897.

Circular Letter No. 385-3322, dated the 28th May 1897.

Do. 579-5701, dated the 7th August 1897.

Do. C-645, dated the 17th September 1897.

These may be conveniently referred to as the system of piece-work proper introduced in certain districts in May 1897, and the system of payment-by-results introduced to a more limited extent at the end of August or the beginning of September 1897.

The orders of May.

10. A cardinal principle of the orders of May was that the system should be confined to the able-bodied, that it should not be introduced at all where the proportion of weak or inefficient labour was large, and that adequate provision should everywhere be made for the balance of weakly or infirm on task-work or infirm gangs within easy distance. The more responsible District, Public Works Department and Medical staff were specially enjoined to personally see to the proper separation of these two classes. The whole to be subject to the orders of the Commissioners of Divisions, and a gradual introduction was particularly insisted on.

Within these limits arrangements for giving out work to gangs selecting their own mates, or under reliable large Public Works contractors acting as work agents, or the employment of selected parties of workers upon ordinary road maintenance were permissible, a considerable discretion being given to local officers, even to the extent of deferring or forbidding the introduction on charges considered unsuitable. Full details of the dates of the introduction of piece-work, the time it continued, its effects on workers and the cost of work as far as these can be given, will be found in the statements attached, not merely for each district, but for each relief work within it. From these it will be seen that on some it was never introduced at all, on others only for a short time, while in a few a modified form of it was successfully maintained throughout. In the Chhattisgarh Civil Division a modified form of it, utilizing the agency of petty contractors, was successfully introduced by Mr. Penny, the Superintendent of Works.

The orders of August.

11. The orders of August 1897 extended the application of payments-by-results as far as the "distinctly robust and strong" were concerned, but limited their earnings to the lowest or D wage. The object of this was to offer no inducement to such persons to remain on relief-works, their labours being at the time urgently required in the fields. They insisted, if possible more forcibly than was done in the orders of May, on adequate provision for the weakly, the infirm and the dependants of all classes in the shape of task-work alongside. The Deputy Commissioner, the Executive Engineer and their respective

* Chief Engineer's Note, dated 22nd January 1897, and circulated demi-officially.

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assistants were particularly charged with the classification of workers, and the necessity for extreme caution laid down in the clearest terms. The orders were made applicable only to a very limited extent in the Nagpur and Chhattisgarh Divisions, where Mr. Penny's rules and orders were approved by both Commissioners. Certain *ghât* work under contractors and other Charges in the Nerbudda Division were also exempted, and the consent of the Commissioner was always to be obtained before introduction. The Mandla and Seoni districts were subsequently exempted at the request of the Commissioner, Jubbulpore Division. The orders were never applied in Raipur and only for some 10 days in Bilaspur. In the Nagpur Civil Division they were introduced in the Wardha and Nagpur Districts in September, and in Bhandara and Balaghat, after personal inspection by the Commissioner, at the beginning of October. In the Nerbudda Division Chhindwara was exempted; in Betul they were introduced on two works only where the workers were said to be in especially good condition; in Hoshangabad, partly in Narsingpur and on the one work in Nimar in September 1897. Everywhere the greatest care was taken to insist on the precautions held necessary to protect the weaker and less robust of the workers, robust persons only being employed on either piece-work or paid by results, the selection being usually made by the Hospital Assistant or Inspecting Officer, in many cases under the eye of either a District Officer or Executive Engineer or one of their senior Assistants, as will be seen from the detailed statements attached. Task-work Charges or infirm gangs were provided alongside every piece-work Charge with two exceptions in the southern sub-division of Jubbulpore, for 14 and 20 days respectively. In both these cases the workers were all in exceptionally robust condition, and the latter had task-work within easy distance specially reserved for any weakly workers needing it.

12. One system or the other was practically in force variously from a few days to six months. In places it was reported as unpopular, in a few it "led to large numbers of able-bodied idlers leaving the works: the majority," continues the Commissioner of Hoshangabad, "were persons who did not require support and could easily manage for themselves." Others again are reported as leaving for ordinary agricultural operations, but nowhere were any ill effects noted on those who remained. The effect in certain cases where large numbers of able-bodied left was undoubtedly to proportionately reduce the average condition of the remainder, and so may have led to unfavourable reports by Inspecting Officers unacquainted with the whole facts. In is not practicable to review each relief Charge in detail or strike any useful average, but the sum of all the reports goes to show that everywhere the condition even of the weaklings who remained for any time on the works was towards improvement, and in many this was very marked.

Effect of piece-work on workers and work.

As the Districts of Mandla, Betul and Bilaspur have been a good deal referred to in public letters and papers, it may be well to refer to the detailed reports of these districts. In Mandla the introduction of piece-work in June was followed by a considerable exodus of robust workers, who had hitherto done very little work for their pay. Later on an increase occurred, but this was of infirm people in bad condition who were put on task-work. The apparent falling off in condition of some of the workers in the Dindori Tahsil in July and August was due to the large numbers of people who up to this had been living in the jungle coming on to the works in the last stage of destitution. In Betul a very careful selection of the able-bodied was made by Sergeant Desmond, one of the best famine officers, assisted by the Hospital Assistant. The system was there also reported popular and the numbers on works did not decrease until the people "left for pressing field work." In Bilaspur the introduction of piece-work had no perceptible effect on the numbers until the limitation to the D wage came in, and even then it is reported that there was no material effect on the condition of the workers; the robust remained so and the weakly ones on task-work steadily improved.

The question as regards the effect on the health of the people has been further dealt with in Revenue Department letters No. F.-2016 of the 28th October 1897 and F.-151 of the 4th February 1898. As regards its effect on the rates, the supervising establishment, or in regard to general management, in only a few cases was it introduced early enough or maintained sufficiently continuously to enable any safe deductions to be drawn. In those Charges where it was more or less continuously adopted, the outturn of work was excellent and the results uniformly good. In four Charges of the Nagpur District the ratio of cost of work was as compared with ordinary Public Works rates as 1·2 is to 1. In Betul, where Sergeant Desmond's methods amounted practically to payment-by-results, the ratio for the whole district is only 1·4 to 1 excluding and 1·6 to 1 including gratuitous relief.

Extract, paragraphs 7 and 8, of Note on Mr. Higham's Report.

7. I entirely agree with Mr. Higham as to the desirability of substituting "piece-work" for "task-work," or what is erroneously so called. The case is well summed up in his paragraph 26. Under a proper organization payments-by-results should be the rule, certainly for all relief-works carried out under the Public Works Department. It seems unnecessary to add to the admirable paragraphs (22 to 25) dealing with the objections to task-work, though, among others, it might with reason be urged, that the famine coolie has to a great extent realized that he need not do a task to obtain a daily dole. Often he does not try to do the task, and I fail to see how, save by some system of payment-by-results, he can be compelled to do so. In the case of those reduced in strength, the payment made may be for a smaller result, while cases of absolute incapacity for work can only be dealt with under a system of gratuitous relief.

The system on which payment for relief-work should be made.

Another and a very serious objection is the serious demoralization that obtains under a system amounting to gratuitous relief obtained under false pretences—the payment for tasks that are not fulfilled and that every one concerned knows cannot be fulfilled.

8. The merits of a system of piece-works are on all sides admitted; the objections are, to the best of my judgment, mainly exaggerated or based on an altogether insufficient trial. Admitting the difficulties mentioned in the Famine Commission's Report, that "the portions of the population not accustomed to work for wages on public works will not spontaneously seek such employment until forced to do so by want, and that it must be anticipated that many will be reduced in strength, and, at first at all events, incapable of earning a livelihood on the public works," there is no necessity to assume that "the work to be done to earn a livelihood by every one must be that of an able-bodied labourer". On the contrary, just as the rates for piece-work have been arranged in these Provinces to work on an automatic scale, corresponding to the price of food-grain, so a scale can perfectly well be adjusted to suit the different classes and conditions of the people, be they habitually used or entirely unused to the employment provided, and even for the weakly, the dependants, the women and the children. The latter, for instance are throughout India constantly employed on piece-work by the *cowrie* system, and on ordinary large works are often to be found those whose physique is little better than some of the emaciated famine coolies, working alongside stalwart diggers, and easily earning something better than a mere subsistence wage. Piece-work by family groups or gangs is perfectly familiar to all classes in India, and readily accepted by them.

Piece-work.

There is nothing to prevent a scale being so adjusted that every person fit to come on to the works at all shall be able to earn any sum held sufficient for a daily wage, and the scale moreover can be worked so as to gradually reduce the rate when it is found to become too attractive, or the price of food-grain to fall.

That all relief-works under the Public Works Department should at any rate begin on a strict system of payment-by-results is now generally accepted, for it is notoriously exceedingly difficult to induce people, demoralized by payment for nominal tasks, to accept the principle of working for a living. If it were possible before distress became pronounced in any district to expand ordinary public works under this or other adaptations of contract work, the danger of any severe distress would be materially lessened, if not indeed obviated but there would of course remain the danger of a larger expenditure being incurred than the conditions of scarcity warranted. Some such risk must of course be run, but compared with the unavoidable outlay when once famine is declared and relief-works started, the risk is small. In the past year the monthly outlay on relief under public works in these Provinces has considerably exceeded the ordinary annual expenditure on public works of all sorts, including Original Works and Repairs of Civil Buildings and Communications. If the expenditure on "precautions" be incurred upon really useful works, the addition to the budget of a few lakhs would be a most insignificant insurance.

As regards the encouragement offered under the system for the piece-worker to earn too high wages, or to do too much, this is only possible within restricted limits, and as above pointed out, the remedy would lie in the making of the rate less attractive as soon as any undue extension became apparent.

88. For non-piece-workers I should recommend either village relief-works or gratuitous relief. I am not, however, sure if the expressions are not synonymous. For gratuitous relief I recommend food, not money.

For those who cannot work, it is unnecessary for me to enter upon the questions of village relief, poor-houses, or the various forms of relief to be undertaken by District Officers, but for the dependants of workers under Public Works, the children, the sick, or those who though unfit for actual work have unavoidably to be drafted, temporarily or otherwise, to Public Works camps, the relief given should, I consider, be given in food, cooked or uncooked, and only in very exceptional cases should a money dole be permitted.

Objections have, I believe, been formerly taken to relief in the form of cooked food on the grounds of caste prejudices. In practice this does not seem to have presented any serious difficulty. The majority of those who came on to works made no objections to the management of kitchens with an establishment of suitable cooks. It would, moreover, not be necessary to give cooked food; arrangements could, if required, be made to allow special castes to cook their own. For the better classes who during a time of severe distress might require relief, other provisions than Public Works relief works would probably be made. A certain discretion must of course be left to meet exceptional cases, but as a corollary to the broad principle of payments-by-result to those who can work, I should lay down the rule for relief in the form of food only for those who cannot. Great abuses have nearly everywhere attended the giving of cash doles to dependants and children—the latter have frequently been hired out, in cases reported have been used by different gangs three times over, others having received the money have been grossly neglected by their parents and relations, sometimes not fed at all. Families have, by bringing forward dependants and children on many works, received a total sum quite disproportioned to their needs. Women and children have been systematically sent out on to works by men who sat in idleness rather than in actual want; and so long as a money dole is forthcoming for non-workers, it is almost impossible to measure how far distress is really pressing.

89. No great harm would ensue if an able-bodied man occasionally earned too much—if this happened on any large scale the rate would have to be reduced and the gangs re-classed.

90. This must necessarily depend on local conditions.

91. My experience is that the head of the gang selected by the people themselves usually acts fairly.

92. The reductions in establishment would be very large and a whole army of go-betweens would be got rid of, greatly to the benefit of all concerned.

93—95.—I am not able to answer this. In regard to tasks and classification I have noted as follows* :—

"In the matter of the classification of famine labourers and the rates of wages that should be paid to them, I doubt if it is worthwhile to lay down a Code scale even as simple as that proposed by Mr. Higham. The existing Code classification, as he says, entirely broke down. Such a classification may, where the daily labour system is found absolutely necessary, be of use in determining the task to be set or the wages to be given to men, women or children, more or less skilled, and differing in physical capacity, but what holds good for one district will not apply in the next, and varies greatly in the same district at various times. The Gond women, for instance, easily did more work than many townsmen, and while some children did as much as their mothers, others could only sit and look on. From the note below it will seem even that in these Provinces the earthwork done per day-unit of all classes varied from a minimum of one cubic foot in Bhandara to a maximum of 45 cubic feet in the Chhattisgarh States Roads Division; the metal breaking from 0·3 cubic feet in Saugar to 4·0 cubic feet in Narsinghpur; and that the digger or male day-unit varied from 28 cubic feet of earthwork in Mandla to 108 cubic feet in the Chhattisgarh States Roads Division. For the people who are able to work, either as diggers, carriers, or stone-breakers, the arrangements that prevail upon ordinary Public Works will generally be found as suitable as any that can be laid down by rule; while for those who are unfit, I strongly hold it to be most economical to give gratuitous relief until they can be certified as sufficiently robust to do an ordinary light day's work. It is not so much uniformity of Code rule that is needed as elasticity, and as far as Public Works relief works are concerned, the people may be broadly divided into (1) those who can, and (2) those who cannot work."

Average on all Charges in the District of work done during the last year's famine operations in the Central Provinces.

Districts.	Per day-unit of all classes. Earthwork, cubic feet. Maximum.	Earthwork, cubic feet. Minimum.	Metal-breaking, cubic feet. Maximum.	Metal-breaking, cubic feet. Minimum.	Per digger or male day-unit. Earthwork, cubic feet.	Remarks.
Jubbulpore	16	4	1·7	0·5	44	
Mandla	10	3	...	0·5	32	
Seoni	30	11	2·1	1·0	92	
Saugor	25	4	2·0	0·3	48	
Domoh	12	3	3·0	0·3	32	
Nagpur	49	12	12·0	2·1	148	This figure relates to a very small quantity done under exceptional supervision with many professional stone-breakers and diggers on the works.
Wardha	15	...	...	1·8	72	
Chanda	...	...	...	...	...	No work done by Famine labour.
Bhandara	28	1†	4·0	0·7	68	†An exceptional figure.
Balaghat	22	4	2·0	0·8	52	
Hoshangabad	32	5	3·0	0·6	64	
Nimar	24	11	...	1·0	84	
Betul	18	11	2·0	1·7	68	
Narsinghpur	11	5	4·0	0·8	44	
Chhindwara	26	7	2·0	2·0	68	
Raipur	24	4	2·2	0·5	56	
Bilaspur	29	7	2·8	0·7	60	
Sambalpur	16	...	...	...	76	
Chhattisgarh States, Roads Division	45	9	2·0	2·0	108	
Average	24	3·6	3·2	1·0	68	

* *Vide* paragraph 2 of my Note on Mr. Higham's Report.

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96. If an alternative system is maintained, the Famine Code wage table would also be wanted.

97 and 98. *Vide* answer to questions 93 to 95 above.

99 and 100. As regards fines, they may be useful as a threat, or under *thoroughly reliable supervision* may be occasionally exacted from recalcitrant persons who are sufficiently robust to accomplish a full daily task, but who persistently malinger; but for these the true remedy is payment only by results. From the emaciated or weakly creatures who cannot do an ordinary task, or those who are not given more than a daily subsistence wage, no fine is possible. In the hands of less reliable supervision, *viz.*, the ordinary native who would make the exactions, the power to fine is merely an opportunity for extortion—one more opportunity for irregularity. The idea that a system of regulating fines by an appeal to responsible European officers may be dismissed. To put in an application to a busy Sub-Divisional officer before docking every idler or troublesome old woman of a pie or so is obviously impossible.

101. I have seen no reports of relief-workers on the D wage suffering in health.

102. Yes. Under the piece-work system many would earn sufficient to support families.

103. There is no objection in India to Sunday work or a Sunday wage, but the staff wants a weekly rest and the workers a bazar day. It is best to allow the latter to fix their own day off. Under the system fixing a task yielding subsistence wage difficulties of all sorts will occur, and under such conditions there may be nothing for it but to pay for the day off. But under a sound system of relief-work operations, the cases where it is not possible for the workers to earn something more than a daily subsistence wage, either under the piece-work, the North-Western Provinces "intermediate", or some similar system should be rare.

104 to 108. See my remarks on tasks above. I am strongly opposed to laying down hard and fast rules that will only lead to further trouble and have to be set aside in practice.

112. One adult male worker to three women and children approximately. The proportion varied greatly in different districts and in the same districts at different periods, especially on piece-work.

113. In some cases that came to my notice the men did not go on to the works at all, but sent their women and children. The best remedy in cases like this would be to pay in food, not in cash.

114. I have already answered this question. All able-bodied people who are fit to be drafted on to relief-works with their dependants should be made over to the Public Works Department; the village relief works, poor-houses and other forms of gratuitous relief being under the Civil Officers.

115 to 117. As regards the control it is most essential that the responsibility of Public Works Departmental and Civil Officers for the control of relief works should be clearly laid down. The workers who, as above noted, are considered fit for employment on Public Works should in my opinion be organized, managed and controlled by the departmental officer. Those who are not considered fit, or who are employed on village or *takavi* works, the Public Works Officer should have no concern with. I agree with Mr. Higham in considering anything else a waste of power, and as likely moreover to lead to needless friction. The drafting of the people to relief works should be best done by the Civil and Medical Departments, but when once the drafts have been made over, the fixing of a task, by which I mean the rate to be paid for piece-work, is a matter regarding which a Departmental is a better judge than a District Officer. While I think there should be no more interference by the Civil Officers in matters of detail than there would be on ordinary public works expanded under the usual system, I should advocate the fullest inspection of all workers from time to time by the Medical and Civil authorities. Nor do I wish to suggest anything that would seem to impair the authority of the Civil head of the district whom the Public Works Officer would naturally have to consult throughout the operations. Both would of course be guided as to the general policy of the relief needed by orders from Government.

118. It is improbable that the precise conditions of last year will be repeated and that so many provinces may at one time find so great a scarcity of Public Works establishment, but if the ordinary Civil and Military Engineers and subordinates should prove insufficient to provide the supervising establishment required, the best source of recruitment would, I think, be the Staff Corps for the superior, and the native officers of regiments for the subordinate posts. The latter are accustomed to discipline and responsibility, are good managers of men, usually trustworthy, and their position is a guarantee of their integrity. If, as I assume, payment-by-results would be the rule on all Public Works relief works, the nomination of "Officers-in-charge" from another department would be unnecessary, and, I think, undesirable.

Lastly, there are the contractors and their staff usually attached to an executive division. Many of these are very reliable men, thoroughly accustomed to the management of labour of all sorts, and, although naturally looking to make a profit out of it, are fully alive to the fact that to be a successful contractor the first thing to do is to see that the people are paid. I have known many contractors who at a word could procure unlimited labour, and whose success in this respect was due to their reputation for prompt payments. Those who have had experience of the payment of labourers by reliable contract agency and by the scratch staff brought together in an ordinary relief work, would have no hesitation as to which to choose; or as to which would be most willingly accepted by the workers themselves. I therefore strongly support the conclusion drawn in paragraph 38 of Mr. Higham's report on the management of famine relief works.

119. I consider it imperatively necessary. No ship or regiment can be properly worked with more than one commanding officer at a time.

120. Yes. They did so during the recent famine in the Central Provinces very successfully.

121. It was not found necessary, and I think this would be better left to the district authorities.

122. In many cases the Civil Agency system degenerated into a something very like a general holiday. The people described the difference between the Public Works Department and the Civil Agency systems as *soutéli ma* (step-mother) compared with *ma bap*.

123. There were very few works of any importance, other than purely village works, that were not handed over to Public Works Department. I think that some of the more weakly people sent on the Public Works relief works could have been better dealt with by the Civil Officers, under a system of gratuitous relief.

124. The method of payment must depend largely on the system of work adopted and of course on the conditions of the people to be relieved. If piece-work or some modification of payment-by-results is in force, payments either once or twice a week will amply suffice, and probably be preferred; but for daily labourers doing so-called tasks, that is, being set to do a purely nominal task for a subsistence wage, daily payments are essential. The condition of this class of workers is liable to be such that a daily dole, either of food or money, is a necessity, and its payment daily under the best supervision obtainable is the greatest safeguard against fraud. It is, as Mr. Penny aptly remarks in his note on Mr. Higham's report, easily understood by the workers, it makes fraud more difficult, for if fictitious entries are made, it is not at their expense, and it does away with the necessity for the nominal roll.

125. I think the nearest *pice* is more convenient.

126. I think independent cashiers the better check, but I would let the Sub-Divisional Officer select the men he can best trust.

127. We went on the plan of refusing work to no applicant, and I think this is sound. In a bad famine the people might die for want of a *chalan*.

128. There are several officers who can answer this better than I can. In some cases there was, I believe, a great reluctance, but having come, the Gonds and others worked very steadily, did full tasks and proved very easy to manage.

129. This must depend on local circumstances. The suggestions laid down in our General Order No. C-498 of 26th December 1896, worked well, but I would not lay down an arbitrary rule.

130. I think kitchens a necessity on all large relief works, and that cash doles should not be given to children. See answer to question No. 88 above.

131. In the case of works extending over some 17 or 18 districts, and varying so widely in character, no useful purpose would be served by attemps to generalize too precisely as to the results obtained in regard to the work done, useful or otherwise, the wages earned, the task exacted or the expenditure incurred, It would be unfair to compare the

results of stone-breaking under favourable conditions, good organization and careful supervision, at selected quarries near Nagpur or Bhandara, with the results in Raipur, where the officers had to deal with a sudden and unexpected rush of some 70,000 people, coming at the beginning of the hot season, where the establishment was altogether inadequate, the supervision not of the best, work of any sort difficult to find, and the little there was scattered over long lengths of road for which in some cases surveys did not exist. Nor can an average be usefully struck between the outturn of work done by enfeebled wanderers drawn from the poor-houses of large towns, or people driven from their jungles by extreme privation, and only reaching the works in a condition almost moribund, and the work done by the hardier labourers, or by cultivators who came out merely to earn a little additional wage during the slack season. Figures bringing together results for the whole period during which relief operations lasted in the Central Provinces have been prepared for comparison with other Provinces;* these operations have also been dealt with in the series of statements† compiled for each Civil District, with a short memorandum describing the principal conditions affecting it. These statements have been worked out with great care, the details of expenditure being brought up to the closing of the last relief work Charge at the end of 1897. It should be explained that some of the works were commenced under Civil Officers and in some cases it has not as yet been possible to obtain details of the expenditure so incurred. A portion of it seems to have been debited to District Funds, and the Examiner of Public Works Accounts can only take cognizance of the sums debited to the Public Works Department.

There were relieved altogether (including gratuitous relief given by Public Works Department and dependants) 89,648,190 day-units. Statistical Appendix F* shows, arranged by Civil Divisions, by Districts and Public Works Divisions—(1) the areas and population affected; (2) number of relief charges and people attending them; (3) the expenditure and percentage of outlay under different heads; (4) the work done per day-unit and per worker on the different classes of work; (5) the total quantities of earthwork, metal and *muram* done on the different classes of roads; (6) the ratio which the cost of such work bears to ordinary departmental rates; (7) the average prices of food-grains, and (8) the district death-rate per mille.

Statistical Appendix G* is a statement for each district showing the value of the work done by famine labour, the ratio of famine to ordinary rates, the number relieved per rupee, etc., while statistical Appendix H* brings together in a convenient form the ratio of famine to ordinary departmental rates taking (1) wages only; (2) wages and miscellaneous; and (3) including all charges.

From these it will be seen that the gratuitous relief given in the Public Works Department amounts to no more than 8 per cent. of the total. The special establishment, tools, hutting, conservancy, etc., cost 22 per cent., the remaining 70 per cent. being spent on wages. The ratio of famine rates compared with ordinary departmental rates was for the whole period of operations in the Central Provinces as 2·3 to 1, or if all gratuitous relief, etc., be included, as 2·5 to 1. Where the supervision was uniformly excellent these figures improve, for instance—

In Betul the ratio is as	. . . .	1·4 and 1·6 to 1
„ Bhandara „	. . . .	1·7 „ 1·8 to 1
„ Nagpur „	. . . .	1·7 „ 1·8 to 1
„ Seoni „	. . . .	1·8 „ 1·9 to 1
„ Chhattisgarh States the ratio is as	.	2·0 „ 2·1 to 1
„ Chhindwara the ratio is as	. . .	2·1 „ 2·2 to 1

The highest were Damoh with 4·4 and 5·2 to 1 and Mandla with 3·7 and 4·2 to 1.

For fuller information please see the statistical appendices to the Public Works Section of the Central Provinces Famine Report.

132. With reference to Famine accounts Mr. Lund, the Examiner of Public Works Accounts, during the last year's famine, writes as follow:—

"The initial forms of famine accounts used in the Central Provinces are those described in paragraphs 32 to 44 of Central Provinces General Order No. C-498, dated 26th December 1896. With slight modifications they are the same as those drawn up in December 1896 for use in the North-Western Provinces. Simple as the forms are it has, in many cases, been no easy matter to get the gang muharrirs and the officers-in-charge to understand and keep them at all correctly, even with the assistance of occasional visits from trained Public Works Department Accountants.

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"With regard to (1) Mr. Higham's objection that the initial and periodical returns exhibit only the figures for the period (day, week, or month) to which they relate, and (2) his proposals for remedying this, I would remark that to attempt to make the officer-in-charge's work abstract or day book show up-to-date figures of expenditure would, I fear, only end in further retarding the completion and submission of the monthly accounts of the Division. It has to be remembered that, as a rule, the officer-in-charge pays only the relief-workers; other miscellaneous payments, often of considerable amount, are made by the Sub-Divisional Officer, and others again by the Divisional Officer, so that it is not till the accounts are made up in the Divisional Office that the up-to-date outlay on individual works and for the whole Division becomes known; and similarly, it isnot till the several Divisional accounts are audited and booked in the Examiner's Office that the up-to-date outlay of the whole Province becomes known.

"A committee of experts, such as Mr. Higham suggests, might perhaps be able to devise some means of lessening the time that is now taken in arriving at the last of the above stages of account; though, seeing that six weeks is required and allowed for the monthly compilation, audit, and booking of the ordinary Public Works expenditure of a Province, I am inclined to doubt whether, during a famine of such magnitude as that from which the Central Provinces is just emerging, when, as happened here from April to October last, the average *monthly* expenditure on famine relief-works about equals the *yearly* outlay on ordinary public works, it would ever be possible, no matter how perfect the arrangement, to produce audited figures of actual expenditure on individual works and for a whole Province within less than seven or eight weeks of the close of the month to which the outlay pertained."

I think that in all Relief works managed by the Public Works Department it would be very desirable to adhere as closely as may be practicable to the Public Works Forms of Accounts. The majority of the staff employed are acquainted with these forms, and this is always a very great initial advantage. However good new forms may be the difficulty of teaching the use of them at start outweighs many other advantages.

(*President.*)—You were Chief Engineer and Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, Public Works Department, throughout the famine?—Yes.

In what month did you come?—In March 1896.

Can you tell us what papers you are going to put in?—(I) Printed answers to questions 50 to 132, (II) a few answers to supplementary questions 77A to 113D, (III) a copy of my note on Mr. Higham's report with the opinions of certain selected officers on the management of famine relief works in the future, (IV), the Public Works Department section of the Central Provinces Famine Report with appendices and maps.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—As regards Statement A which you put in, were all these works undertaken?—In Statement A were entered works selected as being useful works; in B works which were selected for execution during the famine. A were proposed works: B were sanctioned works.

All the works actually carried out are those against which allotments have been made?—All the works in Statement B have been carried out wholly or partially.

In the event of your having to start works again in the Central Provinces within a year or two, would it be possible to find works of the same amount?—Yes, it would be possible. There are many of the works unfinished.

In regard to road-making, have you found that consolidation could not be done by relief labourers?—Consolidation and moorum—yes. Of road metal—no. It requires stronger men.

You say in reply to question No. 57 that village tanks afford a useful but dangerous form of village relief works?—I mean that it affords a popular form of relief and that people of every class will go to it whether in distress or not. It is very little check as a test-work; the whole village will turn out to make a village tank.

With reference to your answer to question No. 63, do you think it would be possible by appointing an expert officer to work out any large scheme for minor irrigation works that would be useful?—I can only speak so far as I have

* *Vide* Appendices to accompanying Famine Report, Public Works Department Section.
† *Vide* District Statements and Reports to accompanying Famine Report, Public Works Department Section.

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seen. I have not the knowledge of these Provinces to enable me to speak with certainty. As to storage reservoirs, I should say yes, but as to irrigation works I doubt if it can be done on a large scale. I mean storage as compared with irrigation works. Of course below each tank you could have a certain amount of irrigation. I believe in Chanda and some other parts irrigation might be possible on a larger scale. In the case of Chanda the Chief Commissioner has already ordered an investigation in connection with tank projects.

In other districts is anything likely to come?—We made some efforts in the Jabalpur district, but the matter has been postponed.

Do you suppose they would be very large works or not on village tanks?—I should say not large ones.

With reference to your answer to question No. 68 regarding an embankment for the Raipur-Dhamtari Tramway, was that carried out as a famine work?—A short length only. The earthwork was commenced by the Bengal-Nagpur Railway; work was suspended by the Government of India and a small portion of the bank completed by famine labour.

Was there any arrangement beforehand as to payment?—The Company was to pay at ordinary contract rates. The amount is very small. I think perhaps some ₹6,000 or ₹7,000. It would be adjusted during the current year.

In regard to Appendix H of the report, page 68, you show ₹72,41,337 paid as wages. A great many of your relief works were carried out by contractors?—Not a great many.

Would the commission paid to contractors appear in this statement under the head "Wages" or appear as "Establishment"?—Under the head "Wages".

The average wage as shown in Appendix F, page 59, is 20 pies per worker (*vide* last column). On an average basis of 8 seers to the rupee the D male gets 21 pies. That would include men, women and children?—Yes, per worker.

We may then take it from this that the average earnings were a little less than the D wage?—Yes.

If this includes payment of contractors' commission, we must take something off?—I think a very small amount.

You think the amount paid to contractors was very little?—Yes.

Was this contract system introduced into every district?—No. In the Ghât roads in Narsinghpur, in the Ghât roads in Balaghat, to some extent on the roads in Hoshangabad, under Mr. Penny's system by petty contractors who were really mates or gangers in Chhattisgarh: also in Nagpur.

Mr. Penny's system is simply to give contracts to gangers?—No.

Not large contracts?—No.

Surely Mr. Penny had large contractors?—I should not call them large contractors.

We had his paper, and I understood that the rules were principally intended for large contractors?—My meaning of a large contractor is that the contractor would supply the work of officers-in-charge. He would do the whole thing.

Mr. Penny said that in these cases he was the officer-in-charge?—I suppose he is referring to Balaghat.

That was not Mr. Penny's system I refer to?—Mr. Penny had charge of ten districts as Superintendent of Works.

In these other districts were contractors put in charge of works? In Hoshangabad for instance?—No, there were officers-in-charge and work-agents.

In Appendix F, page 59, under the Head "Expenditure, 3—Miscellaneous", what is included under the head "Special Establishment"?—All the establishment which was specially engaged.

And the officers in charge of works, does that go against establishment?—Yes, they were not work-agents. Many of the officers were Public Works subordinates, in that case they were not shown, but if specially engaged then they were shown. It may or may not include them.

And were gangmen charged to establishment or to works?—Charged as works.

How is the Sunday wage classed?—Classed as wages.

The special feature of works in the Central Provinces latterly appears to have been a combination of piece-work with task-work. Has that been carried out in all parts of the province?—That is answered in paragraphs 10, 11, and 12 of my report.

When you say one system or the other was practically in force variously from a few days to six months. You mean unlimited piece-work system or payment by results?—The latter.

We will leave out the payment by results and treat of as unlimited piece-work. You had piece-work under which there was no limit to the amount a man could earn?—Yes.

Was that introduced in all districts?—No, certainly not. See the answer under paragraph 10 of the report. Each district gives the dates when piece-work was introduced in the district reports now put in; each charge is dealt with in the abstract statements at the end of the report.

Was piece-work only introduced where the percentage of able-bodied labourers was very large?—Orders are given in paragraph 10 of the report. The whole was subject to the orders of Commissioners of Divisions. Gradual introduction was insisted on.

In order to find out the extent of this system we must pick it out from district reports?—Yes.

You cannot say if it was general?—No, it varied in each district and also in each charge of a district.

Where unlimited piece-work was introduced, do you think the results were satisfactory?—Unlimited piece-work was hardly introduced anywhere, because task-works had been maintained alongside.

For those admitted to piece-work there was no limit to the amount they could earn?—No, not under the orders of May.

I understand there was no limit to the amount that might be earned by an individual worker?—No.

That piece-work was carried out mainly by the contractor who was ganger? On the works were contractors employed?—Yes. There were comparatively few.

Were the majority of piece-works under contractors?—No. In Chhattisgarh there were petty contractors.

Who were petty contractors? The head of the gang?—Occasionally the head of the gang.

Did any contractors undertake piece-work for the whole of the camp?—Yes, in Nagpur. Metal-breaking was practically done from the beginning in that way.

Then he became officer-in-charge?—Yes.

Did you have one contractor or more than one in the camp?—There were small camps near Nagpur under one man (stone-breaking at the quarries).

Was this piece-work never introduced when the proportion of feeble people was over 25 per cent?—I should not like to say never. That was the order and it was observed as far as possible.

Then where there was piece-work, did you have gratuitous relief?—Yes, there were kitchens in all camps.

For piece-workers' or task-workers' children?—Both. The orders were that food was not to be refused to whomever they belonged, even if children of piece-workers.

The arrangement made with the contractors was that they were to employ all workers drafted to them?—Yes.

How did that work in practice?—In the few cases where there were contractors it worked very well.

Who drafted the people to contractors? Who distinguished between piece and task-workers?—The orders were that they should be divided by the Sub-Divisional Officer, as far as possible, assisted by the medical officer.

The separation would be by the officer in charge of works?—Possibly, under the general instructions of the Sub-Divisional Officer. The responsibility lay with the Sub-Divisional Officer.

How would they be arranged where the Officer-in-charge was the contractor?—Under the agreement he was bound to employ everybody sent to him.

You must have somebody to send them to him?—There were the orders laid down.

The people who would be put on task-work were very weak workers?—The general procedure was to select the able-bodied for piece-work and leave the remainder for task-work.

Supposing you had excess of carriers, all able-bodied, a great many more than the contractor wanted. Was he bound nevertheless to employ them?—Yes.

Who would pay for them?—The contractor.

The contractor did not pay the wages at all. He paid by the piece, on the cubical contents of the work done.

If he had to employ all these carriers it would mean that there would be so much less to be divided among them?—The roads where contractors were employed was ghât work, and I don't think the carrier difficulty ever came in.

What was the percentage on the amount payable to labourers that was given to contractors for their trouble?—I believe it was about 25 per cent., out of which they had to provide certain material and supervision.

What material?—Certain plant, water-supply, baskets, etc.

What establishment had they to provide for in the way of supervision?—Mohurrirs, time-keepers, water-carriers, and cashiers.

Do you think 25 per cent. was in excess of the amount?—I don't think so. I don't think the contractors cared to take the work. They took it more in the hope of getting other things. It did not pay them.

If the contractor is in charge of 3,000 coolies getting 20 pies a day each, that is, ₹312. He received a quarter of the rate?—I should think nothing like it. The contractor has to pay for a number of people who don't work. When people are first transferred the contractor loses because they are not accustomed to the work. He has to bear that loss.

All the contractor is supposed to do is to pay for the work done. He has nothing to do with paying individuals?—Yes, he has.

(Mr. Penny's rules were read out.)

If you had an excess of feeble labourers the loss does not fall on the contractor?—I am not prepared to say. Of course you will understand that Mr. Penny's orders were issued by Messrs. Penny and Hariott in communication with District Officers, but were not sent round by the Administration. When I am speaking of contractors I am referring only to large contractors, of which there were only two or three. Mr. Penny's system I should consider a system of petty contract.

What establishment was necessary to control contractors?—Practically the same establishment was maintained when we had contractors.

The contractors' commission was so much extra charge really?—Well in a way it was. If you carry the system to the full extent you would reduce the inspection establishment.

The quantities of work that you gave the contractors would always be very limited; would they not?—Not necessarily.

Was the expenditure on works in a famine year as much as it would be in an ordinary year?—Yes.

You would want 12 times the number of contractors?—The whole amount was not spent on contractors, of course. There is a large expenditure on "Miscellaneous."

That would be the case in ordinary years too?—Yes.

Generally, are you disposed to place much confidence on the working of contractors, when distress is widespread?—No. In the early stages a great deal might be done.

In the earlier stages you would be really carrying it out on Public Works principles?—Yes.

Then in August the system of payment by results was introduced. Was that introduced because payment by the other system seemed very large?—The object of this is explained in paragraph 11 of my report.

Were they receiving such wages that they had an inducement to remain on works?—I should say there was no inducement to remain on works.

You did not think the wage of piece-workers was so high as to keep them away from their fields?—Personally I should say no.

Was there any strong expression of feeling on the part of Civil officers that the earnings on works were so high as to prevent people returning to their fields?—No.

Did the orders of August issue on representations of that kind?—The orders of August issued on the grounds stated in paragraph 11 of my report.

That is, if you went on paying your former rates people would not return to their fields?—Yes.

Was that view put before you by Commissioners and other Civil officers?—That is a question which Civil officers will be able to answer better than I can.

When you introduced this system of payment by results nobody was to get more than the D wage. What was the task required?—The orders of August were as described in paragraph 11 of my report, but enforced in very few cases.

I think they had a very limited application?—Yes.

(*President.*)—You say it was never to be applied except with the Chief Commissioner's sanction. I think the order was that it was to be applied in every case, except the Chief Commissioner ordered otherwise?—Yes.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—You said they were not applied in the Chhattisgarh Division where Mr. Penny's rules were in force. I see in the Chief Commissioner's memorandum of 3rd August that the Chief Commissioner wished "in any works not yet converted to piece-work the principles herein set forth (and especially the principle that persons selected as able-bodied for piece-work shall not earn more than the D wage) to be applied." Were Mr. Penny's rules so far modified as to restrict the earnings of able-bodied persons to D?—I think not.

It took some time for these orders to reach?—These orders were issued, as a matter of fact, in August. I don't think they were applied in parts till September, by that time the Chief Commissioner had issued some further memoranda. The circular of the 17th September reached local officers before they had taken action on the circular of the 7th of August. As a matter of fact I was in Balaghat in September and the orders had not then reached the local officers there.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—Was this payment by results applicable in the case of earth-work, where your required a certain number of diggers?—The orders were to apply it to earth-work.

I mean to say it was a new departure. You allowed nobody to earn more than the D wage. I want to know whether the diggers were content to remain there earning the D wage?—They were not. The district report shows that many of them left. It had the effect of sending many of them to their fields.

Did works stop in consequence?—No, the able-bodied left but a large proportion of infirms remained.

Therefore there would be a larger number on task-works?—I think you will see that in some districts it was the case. In some of these statements the figures work out as showing piece-work and tasks-work combined being the most expensive.

In metal work it does not matter. In earthwork you cannot get on without them?—No. It would be injurious to the work certainly. It was at Bhandara that all the works where payment by results was enforced were metalling works or consolidation.

There was no earthwork?—No.

What would you consider was the effect of the order of August? Did you think it would be advantageous?—The object of the order of August was to reduce the number of able-bodied people who were supposed to have employment ready for them in the fields. It would not benefit the works as public works; on the contrary it had the effect of reducing the number of able-bodied people. That is stated in many of the district reports. (Witness read out paragraph 3 of the Hoshangabad report.)

I understand generally that the combination of piece-work and task-work was not universal through the Central Provinces? It was only on a few works that it was introduced?—Wherever we had piece-works under the orders of August, alongside was task-work, but the introduction of the orders of August was not universal. Piece-work was suspended in some places.

On a great many works there was task-work only?—A great many.

In fact the proportion of piece-work was comparatively small?—Under the orders of August its application was much more limited. Under the orders of May not so.

Had you piece-work under contractors on a large scale?—No, to a very limited amount.

Piece-work was introduced but not enforced from July?—Not on all works. The orders of August were very limited.

In working piece-work (*vide* paragraph 8 of your note on Mr. Higham's system), do you consider on relief works it would be necessary to have two or three scales of rates?—It would be necessary in the same district, possibly in the same tahsil, not on the same work.

Do you think it would be necessary to have more than one scale?—Yes, if the work was a large one.

I mean different rates for able-bodied than for weak ones?—I should like to explain that the works we are dealing with are lines of roads where a limited number of people could be employed. In speaking of works you are apt to

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think that a large number were employed together: on our works it was not so.

(*Mr. Holderness*).—I find the following sentence in the orders of the 7th of August: "it should be understood that every work must now have a task-work portion, and that the distance test (originally devised for the purpose of keeping off task-work the dependants of able-bodied piece-workers) is to be abandoned." Will you explain what this distance test was which was imposed in the earlier orders of May?—I should find it rather difficult to explain.

Was it the intention that infirm gangs should be moved to a distance from piece-workers?—Under the orders of May yes, some distance away.

That is the meaning of this distance test?—Yes.

In what way did it operate?—My own view is that it was not a distance test. We never had, properly speaking, a distance test as in Bombay for instance.

I think apparently the intention of the orders of May was that infirm people should be removed to a separate charge?—To a separate work. I should like to explain that the work was in long lengths; sometimes you would have a road charge 10 miles in length.

The effect was to remove the infirm gangs from piece-workers?—Yes, to separate them.

Did that operate to break up families?—I think not.

If there were infirm portions of a family, were they separated?—No.

Would the family remain on piece-work system?—They would remain either on piece or task-work.

You said you thought that under the piece-work rules of May dependants of piece-workers received gratuitous relief. That is not borne out by the orders, is it?—As a matter of fact the dependants of piece-workers were given gratuitous relief in kitchens. I myself gave orders to the effect that no children were ever to be refused gratuitous relief in kitchens.

These various orders that you speak of were introduced when piece-work rules were considered to be pressing too heavily?—That order was to avoid any suspicion of people being left out.

After complaints had been made of people being left out?—I don't think so. I can only give you my own idea.

You never had to raise rates?—No. I cannot of course be answerable for what was done by every officer.

(*President.*)—At the end of paragraph 2 of the circular of 15th May 1897, I find the following sentence, talking of piece-work it says: "it will be more than ever necessary to make sure, by an effective test, that those remaining are *bonâ fide* people for whom relief work is a necessity. This can be most readily ascertained by a strict test under the piece-work system, the rates being lowered to a mere subsistence wage." Does that refer to the piece-work system under this circular?—That was written with reference to the monsoon rains when it was thought that people would return to their villages.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—The piece-work system was introduced in Mandla about May or June?—In reply the witness read out paragraph 3 of the Mandla district report.

With these facts before you, do you think the piece-work system in Mandla was a success?—I don't think it had a chance.

Do you think the classification was too strict?—The details are given under the head of each charge.

Do you consider the classification of relief-workers was a reasonable one or not in Mandla?—I am not able to say.

After piece-work system had been introduced in Mandla, it is stated in paragraph 3 of the report that the Deputy Commissioner and Civil Surgeon strongly urged the abolition of piece-work altogether, on the ground that over-strict classification had made the works unpopular and that the weak and sickly would not come to them without special encouragement. Do you agree with them?—No. I think it is a mis-statement. (Witness read to the Commission a portion from the "Remarks" column of the Abstract Statement of value of works done by famine labour in the Mandla district.)

I understand there was piece-work in Mandla from the end of June on most works?—Yes.

The Civil Surgeon is of opinion that the "practical closure of Public Works Department works to all but robust workers caused fresh distress," was that so?—A very large number of workers came on afterwards.

I find that at the end of May there were 23,000 persons, and in June 8,600. Do you think the difference is due to the disappearance of able-bodied persons?—I cannot say.

Do you think the D wage under the August rules is a living wage?—For an able-bodied person I do not think the D wage restriction was a good thing.

You say in paragraph 12 of your report that the apparent falling off in condition of some of the workers in Dindori Tahsil in July and August was due to the large numbers of people who up to this had been living in the jungle coming on to the works in the last stage of destitution. Why had they held off so long?—I am not able to say. I believe they are very difficult people to deal with.

Do you think it was owing to the unpopularity of the works?—That had nothing whatever to do with it.

In reply to question No. 70 you refer to certain Public Works statements of works. I suppose these statements may be taken as relief-work programmes?—Yes. Statement A was the first from which works were to be selected and B was the statement of selected works.

When did these statements reach the district?—Statements A and B were revised from time to time. I cannot say when they reached.

Would it be in December?—It varied with each Civil Division. I think the first went to Nerbudda, then to Jabalpur, next to Nagpur and next to Chhattisgarh. These were revised from time to time.

When did the first edition reach any of the Divisions?—I should think in December and January.

Was the Public Works ready to assume management of works in Statement B?—Yes, in January. I speak subject to correction. I think what happened in Jabalpur was that the Commissioner did not wish to have the list printed until it could be completed. It was sent to him and passed between him and the Executive Engineer for some weeks.

Were you ready with your establishments to undertake the management of the Jabalpur Division?—Yes; we put them on as fast as they were required.

Had the District Officers to run the works till the Public Works Department were prepared to take them over?—No. In the proceedings of Conference held at Jabalpur on the 9th December it is said in the meantime, until the Public Works Department are ready in any district to assume the management of relief works, they should continue, as at present, in the hands of the Civil Officers. That was at the request of Mr. Anderson, who preferred that this should remain in the hands of Civil Officers till the Public Works Department Circular orders were published.

Was there great difficulty in getting your establishment as relief works increased?—Yes. Subordinates we could not get at all; we had to make the best of what we had.

You advertized?—Yes. We could not get any from other provinces.

Could the Military Department be indented on for any men qualified to act as work agents? Non-Commissioned Officers?—I think not, but they would be qualified to act as officers in charge.

Or Native officers?—No.

Without professional qualifications could you use them?—Not as work-agents, but as officers-in-charge. Not being able to draw on other provinces we had not sufficient officers-in-charge. Public Works officers we could not get anywhere.

If you had gone into the market earlier could you have got men?—I don't think so. The North-Western Provinces had gone into the market earlier before us.

Did you use Military officers in any of the Divisions for inspection?—We had six Royal Engineers posted to Public Works as Sub-Divisional Officers or acting under the Executive Engineers. We had two or three Staff Corps men.

Would you like more in the case of a similar famine?—I may explain that most of the Sappers sent to us were men who had just arrived in India. They did not know the language. The Staff Corps men had passed examinations and were efficient men in looking after famine relief.

In a future famine would you like more?—I should like more Staff Corps officers.

You had no experience with Native officers?—No.

(*President.*)—With reference to a question put to you by Mr. Holderness, I want to know if this is not the case. I understand the original circular of the 13th of May was seen to be too hard and likely to drive off inefficient labourers, and break up families, and so in the circular letter of the 28th May it was modified by allowing, if necessary, infirm gangs on task-work side by side with piece-workers. Under the orders of the 3rd August, in introducing the system of payment by results, it was laid down that every work should have the piece-work system alongside, and not at a distance, and that the dependants of efficient or inefficient labourers should get doles of food. That correctly describes the system, does it not?—Yes, I think so. I don't think at any time there was a danger of breaking up families. The circular of the 28th of May was, as you suggest, to make it more certain that infirm gangs should be provided for in all cases. Personally I do not think the rules of the original circulars were too hard.

I think if you separate the robust from the inefficient, that must infallibly break up families?—You must not allow it to do so. You have to take an efficient man with an inefficient wife possibly.

What was meant in the circular of the 15th May by saying that on the charges retained on the old system a full task must be insisted on, and anything like overcrowding absolutely prevented. Don't you think that might justify the mistake made by certain Public Works officers in Balaghat?—It might be so read.

As a matter of fact don't you think the task was raised in consequence of these orders?—I don't think the orders had any effect on the task. I think the task was nominal. I don't see how you can insist on a full task without fines.

What is your opinion as to allowing, in the case of a future famine, relief work labourers to earn more than a subsistence wage, regarding the question of having a maximum or not?—Yes, I think myself they should be allowed to earn in excess of the D wage. I don't at all agree with the limit. My answer to question No. 87 explains this.

Would you have any maximum?—I should lay down no fixed rule. If the people are earning too much, you must change the scale.

Did you visit many works during the rains?—Yes, I visited several.

Have you any reason to think that people on the works suffered from exposure in the rains?—Towards the end, I think, they did.

Do you think they suffered more in the Central Provinces than in other parts of India?—I cannot say from personal observation. From all the reports I have seen I think they suffered a good deal from want of clothing. Although we supplied them with food, something in the way of blankets would have been a great boon to an enormous number of people. A good number were of course weakly people and they suffered more.

A certain class of Gonds always work on the works?—Yes.

Hill-men or those who live in the plains?—I believe there were not so many hill-men; they are reluctant to come to the works at all.

(*Mr. Fuller*).—What was the character of the reports as to the condition of the labourers which reached you in the hot weather?—The general effect of the reports was that the people were reduced.

Do I understand that the proportion of sickly and feeble people was very small?—Yes, very small.

I see from the proportion here that the number of infirm during the rains increased considerably?—The proportion of infirms increased by the fact that the able-bodied had gone away. Apart from this, a large number were obliged to go to works as they had no further means of subsistence at their homes.

Was the condition of the people on the works during the rains as good as that of the people who had been on the works before?—Yes. There is no doubt the reports showed that the condition of the people on the works improved considerably the longer they had been on the works, but with the approach of the rains, and the exhaustion of their resources and of jungle food, crowds came on to the works in rather a bad state.

Are we justified in assuming that the rules were relaxed in consequence of the reports that the condition of the people was getting more and more unsatisfactory?—Yes. I might mention that this is borne out in the Bilaspur district report.

(*President.*)—If that is the case, it seems to show that there was some ignorance as to the state of things at headquarters, that such an order as that of the 3rd of August should have been so late in issuing?—That is a matter which I am not prepared to answer. I may say that the orders of August were drawn up with extreme care as regards inefficient labourers. The orders of August were issued because, in the Chief Commissioner's opinion, it was desirable to send certain people back to their fields, who were not in actual want and were being supported out of famine funds. The orders, as regards emaciated people, were extremely carefully drawn up. I don't think the orders of August would in any way have affected the weakly ones; at the best they could only get the D wage.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—As to the staff, out of the ten Sub-Divisional Officers in the Jabalpur district, how many do you consider were, from their previous training, to be relied upon?—Five.

With reference to the use of contractors, large contractors were tried and failed?—I should not say failed, but little work was done under large contractors.

As regards the D wage, as a matter of fact was the great mass of labourers in the hot weather drawing more—No.

Therefore the altering of the D wage affected no material change in their earnings?—Only that of the able-bodied.

You have not, I suppose, worked out the cost separately during the rains and hot weather?—No.

Do you think there would be a considerable difference?—I should think the work done in the rains would be more expensive, a good deal more so. I have no sufficient data.

Your reply to question No. 74 is, "I should say, that by far the greater number have resided on the works." What time of the year are you referring to?—I should say through the whole year if you are referring to the whole province.

Do you mean that during the rains the greater number remained on works?—Yes.

Did you provide shedding for as many as 3,000 people?—Hutting was provided on a very large scale.

What distance do you suppose they would rather walk than sleep on the works?—The villagers themselves would probably prefer to go 4 or 5 miles, 2 or 3 in the morning and 2 or 3 in the evening.

Is it not your experience that a large proportion of people on works were drawn from villages within 6 or 8 miles.—Not a very large proportion.

About 80 per cent.?—No, not as many. I should be inclined to think about half. The greater proportion would sleep on the works. I noticed cases when the people went further than 5 miles. There is a considerable amount of hardship in having to walk 5 miles before and at the end of a day's work.

I take it that you don't wish to modify your statement that during the rains the greater proportion of those who went to the works slept there?—I should say that a large proportion resided on works.

With reference to your answer to question No. 71, in which you say that the movement of relief-workers and their dependants to suitable sites for useful employment must be accepted as a necessity. Do you mean that to apply to all classes in the province?—Yes.

As regards Gonds?—The Gonds would have to be ordered to go to works.

You have had nothing in your experience which would make you think that the people of these provinces would get into a very weak state of health rather than go a long way?—If the people were told they must go they would go; but if the matter were left to their option they would not.

With reference to what you say in your answer to question No. 88, you would not have had any people on piece-works who were not efficient?—I mean to say that my piece-work proposals would come down so as to include the very weakest.

You would have a number of very varying rates?—Yes, necessarily.

Would it not be very difficult to work in practice?—Not as difficult as the task. I should set to the weaver a scale suitable to the weaver, and say, "You have to do that task."

Mr. E. E. Oliver.

15th Mar. 1898.

Would you have separate gangs of weavers?—Yes.

Your idea would be to classify them into as many classes as rates?—The classification might frequently be by districts and tahsils.

How would you provide for inefficients who should come to that work, those who cannot do piece-work?—If a man can do any work he can do piece-work.

Suppose he cannot earn a living wage?—Then you must put him to gratuitous relief.

How would you meet the varying conditions; by varying rates?—Yes.

Officers-in-charge would sort out the different people?—If you have officers-in-charge.

If not, who would sort them out?—The work-agent working with the district official.

Do you think work-agents can be trusted to sort them out?—They have been trusted to do so.

Is it not a fact that the power of sorting people was withdrawn from all except officers-in-charge of divisions?—Theoretically so.

You say in answer to question No. 115 the drafting of the people to relief works would be best done by the Civil and Medical Departments, but when once the drafts have been made over, the fixing of a task, by which I mean the rate to be paid for piece-work, is a matter regarding which a departmental officer is a better judge than a District Officer. As a matter of fact, have there not been many cases in which the rates of Public Works officers have been altered by District Officers?—They have been altered, but not with advantage. I maintain he is not as good a judge as a departmental officer.

During the rains had you any report to show that the conditions of life on work were very unhealthy?—No. There were no great complaints of mortality.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—Is the cost of hutting shown separately for the province?—It is shown with other miscellaneous charges.

Is it not possible to show it?—We could give it. It would necessitate taking it out of the whole of the estimates for hutting.

You say in reply to question No. 80 that the cost per day-unit for hutting would probably be three pies?—The cost of hutting would vary with the cost of material very largely in different districts. The cost of hutting where you have forest trees is very little; in some parts of the Nerbudda Valley it would be very expensive.

SURGEON-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL H. K. MCKAY, Civil Surgeon, Jabalpur, called in and examined.

Sur.-Lt. Col. H. K. McKay.

15th Mar. 1898.

I put in a written statement of evidence and written answers to the Commission's questions.

I.—Departures from the Central Provinces Famine Code which have occurred in the Central Provinces during the recent famine.

I can only speak on matters relating to my own department.

The alterations we found necessary were—

1. Poor-house diet.
2. Do. establishment.
3. Rules for the working of a poor-house.
4. Registers.

Diet.

	Poor-house.		Jail.		Remarks.
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	
	Ch.	Ch.	Ch.	Ch.	
Atta or Rice	8	7	11½	9½	
Rice	8	7	13	11	
Dal	1	1	2	2	
Salt	⅛	⅛	¼	¼	
Oil	⅛	⅛	¼	¼	
Vegetables	⅛	⅛	3	3	
Condiments			40 grs.	40grs.	
Gur	...	...	1	1	

The poor-house diet is certainly not sufficient.

The following increase was found necessary:—

	Chattaks.
Atta or Rice	9
Dal	2
Salt	¼
Oil	¼
Vegetables	3
Condiments	40 grs.

The food should be distributed as follows:—

7 A.M.

	Chattaks.
Rice	2
Dal	½

10 A.M.

	Chattaks.
Rice	4
Dal	1
Vegetables	1

4 P.M.

	Chattaks.
Atta	4
Vegetable	2

Salt and condiments to be added to each meal.

It was not considered advisable to allow the inmates of a poor-house to grind the corn. It is more economical and satisfactory to purchase the atta.

Establishment.

The Code orders that only the Superintendent and moharrir should be paid, all others being taken from the inmates.

I do not think the Code exactly recognises what a poor-house is. No one should be in a poor-house who can work on a relief-work.

A poor-house is not necessarily a hospital. The emaciated inmates require judicious feeding not medicine.

The Code orders that there are to be two male and three female cooks to each 100. Given a poor-house of 1,000 this would have 50 cooks. You have only to see this system working.

If an inmate of a poor-house is able to stir a cauldron of rice he or she should be on the relief-work and would be able to earn the highest wage.

There should be one paid cook to every 100.

Chowkidars should be paid servants, you cannot expect sk eletons to be tramping about for half the day.

One mehter for every 100 should be paid, he can get assistance from the pauper mehters if there are any. As a matter of fact, this valuable class did not appear to have felt the pinch of distress. Beldars should be paid. Digging graves 6 feet deep is hard work.

Management of Poor-house.

There should be a paid Superintendent, and if the strength is over 500 he should be a European.

There should be a head moharrir who should enter the names of all admissions in a General Register. He should at once supply each admission with a ticket giving the register number, date of admission, and gang. The ticket should be made of tin and the above information should be stamped on it.

The ticket should be suspended round the neck by a piece of wire.

The inmates should be divided into gangs of 50 under a mate who should receive a daily ration and Re. 1 a month.

He should keep the register of the gang and be responsible for the sanitation of the barrack occupied by the gang.

To every five gangs there should be a paid moharrir, who will enter on the gang register any casualty that may occur, *viz.*, death, transfer to hospital, discharge, or escape.

He should be present at all meals and be responsible that each man in his gang receives his proper allowance of food.

All entries should be made daily in the gang register, and a daily report made to the Head Moharrir who will then be enabled to make up his morning state and ration indent.

Looking at a General Register will not tell you the number of people present in the poor-house, and it is only by this gang system that such information can be obtained.

The gangs will of course be separated into sexes and castes if possible.

Hospital.

Should be entirely separated from the poor-house and should have a separate cook-house and establishment.

The hospital should be made in blocks capable of holding 50 so as to allow of different diseases being segregated.

The diet of the hospital should be that laid down for the local hospitals.

A sick attendant should be allowed for every 20 ordinary sick; one for every 6 dysentery or diarrhœa cases.

The hospital ticket should shew—

Name.
Register number.
Gang number.
Date of admission into poor-house.
Date of admission into hospital.
Disease.
Treatment.

Orphanage.

This should be a separate institution. No child should be above the age of 13.

It should have the same establishment as that of a poor-house, but the gangs should not be larger than 15 each under a matron, who should receive her daily ration and Re. 1 a month.

The hospital should be some distance off; for the great disease of an orphanage during famine time is *Cancrum oris*, which is a most infectious disease.

The diet should be—

	Ages 10 to 13.	Ages 6 to 9.	Ages 1 to 5.	
	Ch.	Ch.	Ch.	
Rice . . .	3	2½	1	
Atta . . .	2¼	1	¾	
Dal	1½	1	½	
Salt	⅛	⅛	⅛	
Vegetable . .	2	2	1	
Oil	⅛	⅛	⅛	
Condiments . .	6 chattaks for 10		50 orphans	
Milk . . .	...	...	...	4 chattaks for infants

Three meals should be given—

	Chattaks.
7 A.M.	
Rice	1
Dal	½
10 A.M.	
Rice	2
Dal	1
Onions	½
4 P.M.	
Atta	2¼
Vegetables	1½

Cooks, sweepers and chowkidars should be paid.

General Registers.

There should be a universal system of Registers.

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1. Morning state should give the following information :—
   1. Remained.
   2. Admitted.
   3. Discharged.
   4. Died.
   5. Remaining.
   6. In Hospital.
2. Morning state—
   1. Total in Poor-House.
   2. „ Hospital.
   3. Number of gangs.
   4. „ of mates.
   5. „ of Moharrirs.
   6. „ of Cooks.
   7. „ of Chowkidars.
   8. „ of Mehters.

3.—Diet Register.

4.—Hospital Register.

1. Morning state—
   1. Remained.
   2. Admitted.
   3. Discharged.
   4. Died.
   5. Remaining.

Death Register.

1. Total deaths.
2. Died within 1 week of admission to poor-house.
3. „ „ *2 weeks* „ „
4. „ „ *3* „ „ „
5. „ „ *1 month.*

This is a most valuable Register and should include all who die even if they have not died in hospital. There are many who are brought to the poor-house in a moribund state and die before they can be taken to the hospital.

The two Medical Registers A and B are necessary.

Disposal of Dead.

In large poor-houses this is a matter of great difficulty.

The cheapest and most satisfactory way of disposal is by cremation, but care must be taken not to offend.

Burial is difficult and unsatisfactory. One has only to walk near a poor-house cemetery where the graves are properly dug, and, if this is in a black cotton soil, we will see the benefit and necessity for cremation. No amount of lime will keep down the smell or keep away the flies.

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*15. The mortality commenced to rise rapidly in August 1896, the highest being reached in February 1897; about this time general relief-works were started and the mortality gradually decreased, not as rapidly as I should have expected. There is no doubt that the distress had been prolonged and the constitutions seriously undermined, so that it was scarcely possible for them to recoup.

I made some enquiries into about 3,000 deaths in seven of the districts in the Haveli, and was astonished at the few who had availed themselves of relief of any kind, though such relief was close to them.

16. I noticed that the people preferred to loaf on local works to going to a relief-work where a certain amount of work was exacted from them.

They latterly became so demoralized that it was difficult to get any private work carried out.

17. No; I could trace no connection.

18. Gratuitous relief was at first given through the medium of poor-houses, but a good 48 per cent. of deaths in these poor-houses were wanderers from other provinces and Native States.

The first relief should, I think, be village-relief and village-work. The village-relief as latterly carried out in this district was, I think, perfect. Kitchen-relief was carried out more with regard to children, and it was certainly a great

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

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success. Gratuitous relief to those who are ashamed to acknowledge their poverty is a very difficult question.

It is to be a confidential matter, but I fear the word *confidential* is not understood or not believed in. I can safely say that in the Committee of which I was President and Mr. Rustomjee the Secretary, we were the only two who did not know where the money went to. I suggested that registers should be sent confidentially to me or to the Secretary, but we were out-voted. I have perfect confidence in the two Native gentlemen who distributed the money.

57. I would recommend the construction of village tanks if they could be used for irrigation purposes, but if the labour is to be employed to deepen the village tank, I would prefer filling them up.

164 and 165. Central kitchens are certainly a very important system of relief and they should be started early, but I doubt if the poor high class would ever avail themselves of them.

Money doles might be given to formerly well-to-do, but the supervision would have to be very strict.

160. Kitchens to be effective must be so placed that no village in the affected area is further than 5 miles, this would mean a kitchen every 10 miles.

171. Relief given by unofficial agency is not satisfactory.

172. Doles were distributed from July 1895. Poor-houses were established and supported by private subscriptions from September 1895 to April 1896 and carried on by the District Council to November 1895, when they were taken over by Government.

174. I think in the majority of cases pressure had to be used to induce people to go to the poor-house. They preferred begging and they were certainly encouraged by the mistaken charity of the city people.

176. The mortality was greater during the rainy months.

177. Forty-eight per cent. of the deaths were wanderers from the North-Western Provinces and Native States.

178. The majority of the admissions into the poor-house were extremely emaciated.

180. The diet was not sufficient; special diet was given to the hospital.

183. Endeavours were made to get the inmates to work, but it was not satisfactory.

184. The inmates were compelled to remain in the poor-house, there being a police guard at the main gate and chowkidars round the enclosure. Escapes occurred and the delinquents were generally found begging in the bazaars.

194. I am of opinion that kitchens are necessary on each relief-work for the dependants and children; these should be fed, not paid. Even on the daily wage there is a tendency to save; bad grain is bought and the children do not receive their share.

220. This is a difficult matter. There are no Native institutions with sufficient funds to support many orphans. They are unwilling to take them without an allowance, and equally unwilling to allow any one else to take them. A number were sent to the Punjab, but it was found that there was no institution and the funds available very little.

Missionaries are perfectly willing to take any number.

227. A very excellent method of relief, but it must be carried out by tickets stating the maximum amount of grain to be supplied per month.

228. It would of course interfere with private trade, but I think it is to the interest of the Bania to keep up prices.

248.

1891	40·89
1892	31·79
1893	30·15
1894	39·26
1895	40·66
1896	63·1
1897	72·20.

(*President.*)—You are in charge of Jabalpur ?—Yes.

Were you there throughout the famine ?—Yes.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—What opportunities have you had of knowing the condition of the people ?—I had the compiling of statistics.

Had you any branch dispensaries ?—I had three.

Had you opportunities of visiting and seeing a good deal of the people in your district ?—Yes.

When did you first notice any falling off in the condition of the people of the Jabalpur district ?—About the rains of 1895.

What did you notice ?—The people were coming into the city.

What people were they ?—Chiefly outsiders from the Rewah and Panna Native States.

Were they in a reduced condition as regards their health ?—Yes.

At that time were any steps taken to deal with these wanderers ?—Yes. We formed a poor-house in Jabalpur in the end of August or September 1895.

Did people come in any numbers to these poorhouses; can you remember ?—I cannot remember the admissions. The mortality was as follows:—September 31, October 37, November 17, and December 22.

Did the death-rate in 1895 attract your attention at all as an indication of the distress amongst the people ?—Yes, it attracted our attention of course.

Did you bring to the notice of the authorities your impression as regards the condition of the people ?—In my monthly return of vital statistics I called attention to it.

What was the mortality due to ?—A certain amount was due to privation owing to the crops being bad. In 1896 it rose to 63·1 per thousand.

Did you take that as any gauge of the distress prevailing in the district ?—Yes, I should say so. It was highest in September.

Did the numbers coming to poor-houses which you opened in 1895 go on steadily increasing in 1896 ?—Yes.

Did you find that the condition of the people as seen by you went on deteriorating in 1896 ?—Yes.

What other poor-houses were opened out ?—Two at Sehora and Murwara.

Did they fill ?—Yes.

Was the condition of the people who came to you in 1896 worse than those that came in 1895 ?—Yes, decidedly worse.

From what disease did they chiefly suffer ?—From dysentery.

To what cause do you attribute this ?—I should think it was due to a want of suitable food.

Did you notice an increase in 1896 ?—Yes.

You say the poor-house diet is not sufficient ? Did you increase it ?—Yes to 9 chattaks.

Then was it sufficient ?—I think I should increase it still further to 10.

If relief were given early do you think that poor-housee would be less required, and the people would not have reached an emaciated condition ?—I think the people who came to poor-houses were chiefly wanderers, not the people of this district. Over 50 per cent. were people from other provinces.

(*President.*)—From what province—Rewah and Panna.)—Statistics show that out of a total of 5,500 deaths, 2,069 came from Rewah.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Were there many orphans ?—Seven hundred were admitted into the orphanage.

Did you see many cases of *cancrum oris* ?—Yes.

What was the cause ?—The same cause as produced the dysentery,—unsuitable food.

Had you any difficulty in disposing of the dead ?—Yes. It was black cotton soil and we could not keep the ground from cracking up in the hot weather.

(*President.*)—Were the people burnt ?—Yes. We started a crematorium afterwards.

How many dead bodies could you deal with in 24 hours ?—There were 30 a day disposed of in January 1897.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Was it an expensive item ?—In the crematorium we had 3 maunds of wood per body and burnt 3 or 4 bodies at a time.

How many of the people admitted into the poor-houses died; do you remember ?—There were 28,000 admissions in 1897 into the three poor-houses. Of these 5,500 died.

You say gratuitous relief was at first given through the medium of poor-houses; you had no other means of relieving distress at first ?—No.

When were kitchens established ?—I cannot give you the exact date.

Did you find them useful ?—Very useful indeed. In fact improvement started when kitchens were started.

You say in answer to question No. 171 that relief given by unofficial agency is not satisfactory. Why ?—I was President of the Town Relief Committee for the relief of those who were too proud to acknowledge their poverty. There were four members, including a Hindu and a Mahomedan. I wanted them to give me a list of the people they wanted to relieve, but they would not give me a list.

Did you think they did it honestly ?—Yes, I thoroughly trusted them, but they could not distribute the money themselves, they were obliged to entrust it to others, and this was not satisfactory.

I see that during 1897 the death-rate per thousand per annum is 72·2; do you think this is to be relied upon ?—I think so. Possibly you might add another 10 per thousand.

Were the chowkidars themselves victims of distress ?—In some cases. I think you can fairly trust to registration as being as accurate in one year as in another. When one goes about the district you find that the books tally.

(*President.*)—Do you think it is as accurate in a famine year ?—Yes, I think so. Perhaps a few died in the jungles who were not returned.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Do you think the medical aid sufficient to cope with the amount of sickness ?—Quite sufficient. There was no difficulty at all.

You don't think that any people died who would have lived, but for it ?—No, I don't think so. We had a large medical staff.

You attribute the high mortality in your poor-houses and hospitals to the condition in which the people were received, do you not ?—Yes.

In fact, I presume the majority of those who died were received when no amount of food would have been useful ?—Yes.

You didn't want medical comforts, did you ? You had a free hand ?—Yes, we had a free hand.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Is the monthly registration return submitted through you ?—Yes.

Did this give the deaths from starvation or privation ?—No, that is a separate Police return. That does not go through me.

Did you see on the whole that there was a tendency on the part of the people to save from their wage ?—Yes.

How did you notice it ?—When they went to the bunia they would buy parched gram instead of wheat, which they should have bought under the allowance.

Do you think children suffered ?—Yes, I think so.

Were the children more starved than their parents ?—Yes, I should say so.

(*President.*)—Do you think they showed it sooner than adults ?—I think the parents were themselves in an emaciated state and could not possibly feed their children, and children would suffer in consequence.

Do you think as a rule that parents were stinting themselves and their children, and the children showed it more ?—Yes, I think they were stinting both themselves and their children.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—You inspected works from time to time, did you not ?—Yes, frequently.

What is your opinion as to the general condition of the people on works ?—They were pretty thin.

Did you notice any improvements or deterioration as time went on among the workers ?—Latterly there was a great improvement. I think it began when village relief was started.

Sur.-Lt. Col. H. K. McKay.

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When was it started ?—In February 1897.

Was that visible among the people on the works ?—I scarcely know. Of course fewer people came to works when village relief was started. Latterly people were in a fairly robust state.

You say in reply to Question No. 15 "there is no doubt that the distress had been prolonged and the constitutions seriously undermined, so that it was scarcely possible for them to recoup," does that refer to the poor-house population only or generally to the people in the district ?—It refers to the people only.

Should relief have been commenced earlier ?—Possibly it might have been. We commenced poor-houses early.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—Your answer to Question No. 171 has reference to relief given from the Charitable Relief Fund ?—Yes.

Was it not the very object of the fund that relief under that particular object was to be so managed that the names of persons should not be divulged to anybody ?—What I say is that the names should have been given to the President or Secretary confidentially, so that it should not happen that two persons should be relieving one man.

But you had a Hindu and a Mahomedan on the Committee ?—Still the Hindu might have a Mahomedan friend. If it was done through the Secretary, then there was no possibility of two men relieving the one man, as I found happened in one or two instances.

Is that the only objection ?—Yes.

You didn't propose that the matter should be made public ?—I didn't expect it to be made public.

With reference to your answer to Question No. 228, did it as a matter of fact, interfere with private trade ?—It naturally interfered with private trade, but not very much.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—As regards children, was it not a common report in this part of the district that the famine was distinguished by the neglect of parents of their children ?—Yes.

Did you ever come amongst cases where women apparently in good condition had deserted or starved their children ?—We noticed it in Burgi.

Do you think it possible that people in very poor circumstances might have been tempted to neglect their children in order to put by some money ?—They did that certainly.

(*President*).—Were cases of parents stinting their children and not themselves exceptional or common ?—They were common.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—Did kitchens have a great effect on the general appearance of the children ?—Yes, certainly. I think kitchens and village relief saved the situation.

Did it strike you during the rains that the condition of the people on relief works was healthy or unhealthy ?—I should think it was a fairly healthy life. They were well provided with huts.

Can you say if the mortality on relief works was higher than in the surrounding districts ?—I should say that the percentage would be higher because the people were more emaciated.

As regards *cancrum oris*, you said it resulted from unsuitable food; did it not really result from contagion ?—Its origin is due to starvation, but still it is very contagious.

Its prevalence was due to contagion was it not ?—Yes.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Did you take means to prevent that by segregation ?—Yes.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Did *cancrum oris* show itself from the first ?—In orphanages it did.

Rai Bahadur SURENDRA NATH BARAT, Assistant Surgeon, Jabalpur, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

Rai Bahadur Surendra Nath Barat.

15th Mar. 1898.

Management of Poor-Houses.

My experience of the late famine was confined to the management of poor-houses. In the light of that experience the following answers to the queries are given :—

Departures from the principles of the Famine Code during the late famine.

There have been no departures from the *principles* of the Famine Code; but the following changes in its *prescriptions* were made :—

I.—The scale of rations was modified as under :—

	For men.		For women.	
	Scale as in Famine Code.	Modified scale.	Scale as in Famine Code.	Modified scale.
Atta or rice	1 lb.	18 oz.	14 oz.	1 lb.
Pulse	2 oz.	4 ,,	2 ,,	4 oz.
Salt	½ ,,	½ ,,	½ ,,	½ ,,
Ghee or oil	½ ,,	½ ,,	½ ,,	½ ,,
Condiments and vegetables.	¼ ,,	2 ,,	¼ ,,	2 ,,

Bai Bahadur Surendra Nath Barat.

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The Famine Code rations as given in Section 82, Chapter VII, though they barely sustained life, were found insufficient for building up wasted constitutions and withered physiques.

Paupers on this ration simply swelled the roll of infirms and could hardly recoup strength to be fit for work or to be sent to their homes. The diet had accordingly to be changed before large drafts could be made to the relief-works or to the villages.

II.—The ordinary *Establishment*—cooks, sweepers, water bearers and chowkidars—*were all paid.*

The Famine Code lays down that these should consist of paupers and not be taken from outside. Experience, however, has shown that this system, specially in large poor-houses, does not work well. With paid servants better work is done and discipline kept. The arrangement, moreover, is not costly; one paid cook for 100 paupers would do just as well as four pauper-cooks per 100 as required in the Famine Code; while the feeding charges of four such pauper-cooks would be more than Rs. 6 which a paid cook will get. So also with the other servants.

The following table gives the comparative results attained with the two diet scales, both as regards saving of life and economy :—

The degree of success which has attended the measures.

Scale of diet used.	Period of use.	No. of admissions into Poor-House during the period.	No. of deaths during the period.	Rates per cent. of deaths to total admissions.	Rates per cent. of deaths *minus* the moribund cases.	Cost of diet per month per head.	Cost of each diet.	Remarks.
						Rs. A. A.	A. C.	
Famine Code Scale .	From November 1896 to March 1897.	5,370	1,249*	23·26	19·18	1 10 9	0 11	* Of which 219 were moribund cases died within 72 hours.
Modified Scale . .	From April to December 1897.	7,098	1,137*	16·01	12·35	2 8 5	1 4	* Of which 260 were moribund cases died within 72 hours.

It will thus be seen that with change of diet the percentage of deaths fell off from 19·18 to 12·35; while the cost per head increased from 11 pies to 1 anna 4 pies.

This death-rate of 12·35 may be taken as a satisfactory result considering that only shattered healths and living skeletons were given relief in this way. In fact, it compares favourably with the death-rate of many of our local hospitals in normal years.

Part of this decreased mortality was no doubt due to better hospital accommodation and management; but the fact remained that with increased food, the hospital admissions fell off, the infirm gang gradually thinned away, and large "discharges" could be made to the relief-works or to the villages. Thus the ratio per cent. of population discharged to the relief-works was—

From November 1896 to March 1897	...	22·7
„ April to December 1897	...	37·1

I.—As regards economy.

More economy is possible if Government make purchases of food-grains at favourable rates and store them for use at the poor-house. Supply by means of tenders or local purchases at current rates is a more costly procedure.

Advice as to the methods and measures for future famines.

II.—As regards saving of life.

(A) The scale of rations should be modified as indicated above.

(B) The rules as given in Appendix IV should be more explicit, specially as regards the dietary and management of the sick and the infirm. The want of such detailed instructions has been the cause of many mistakes and misconceptions with those who had no previous experience of such famine. The following details should be inserted :—

(1)—*The Management of the Infirm.*

These should be separated and formed into a special gang. They should be given three meals a day instead of two. Their food should be of better quality and well cooked. Pulses and vegetables should be varied at least twice a week. Milk, ghee or mutton may be given extra as required.

The proper treatment of the infirms is a most important factor in poor-house management. Many lives may be saved at this stage. Prevention of disease should be more aimed at than its cure. Once a pauper passes from the infirm gang to the hospital, his chances of life are brought to a minimum.

(2)—*Hospital Management.*

The following points are of importance :—

(*a*) *Hospital Building.*—A rough plan of such buildings should be indicated. It should be in the open, having free play of sun and air; detached blocks are required for different diseases; each block to consist of a group or groups of huts arranged in rows.

(*b*) *Hospital Dietary.*—No scale of hospital diet is given in the Famine Code. To ensure uniformity of practice, such a scale should be fixed, and that which obtains in our local hospitals should be adopted.

Any extra food required may, of course, be supplemented by the Medical Officer.

(*c*) *Hospital Establishment.*—The scale of such establishment should be laid down. There should be one sweeper for every 20 patients; one compounder for every 50; one pauper attendant for every 6; these latter to get a little extra food for the work.

(*d*) *The Diarrhœa and Dysentery Cases.*—These form the largest hospital admissions. Food should be given to these in small quantities four or five times a day. Buttermilk, roasted bael-fruit with sugar may form useful adjuncts to diet in these cases.

(*e*) *Mouth-ulcers and suspected Scurvy*—Cases are very common in a Famine hospital. These should be isolated and given special anti-scorbutic food, such as potatoes, onions, lime-juice and milk.

(*f*) *The moribund cases*—Should be separated and not kept mixed with the others.

(*g*) *The dead bodies*—Should be promptly removed and disposed of—best by cremation.

I.—The unpopularity of poor-houses lies chiefly in the promiscuous huddling of castes. Higher and lower castes should not only have separate enclosures to live in, but separate kitchens for their food.

Other recommendations.

II.—The secret of success in poor-house management lies in organizing the paupers into gangs—say, of 25 to 30 each. The gangs should be in charge of pauper warders, who should receive a little extra food for the work. These warders are to look to the cleanliness of their sheds, report to the Superintendent if any one is sick or is missing, parade the paupers at meal hours and keep watch and ward at night in their respective sections.

(*President.*)—During the famine you were the Honorary Secretary, Jabalpur Poor-house?—Yes.

Were you at Jabalpur throughout the famine?—Yes.

When did you open the poor-house?—September 1895.

What was the average number of inmates in the poor house?—Some 17,000 passed through the poor-house which was in my charge.

Rai Bahadur Surendra Nath Barat.

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How many of these died ?—Three thousand and seventy-six out of 17,466 died. Out of these, 56 per cent. died of diarrhœa and dysentery, 28 per cent. of general debility, 5 per cent. of *Cancrum oris*, 4 per cent. of fever and 6 per cent. of other causes.

What was the general condition of the people when received into the poor-house ?—Mostly in a moribund condition.

What was it due to ?—Want of food.

Was their physical condition bad in 1895 ?—No; only one per cent. were in a moribund state at that time.

Were they suffering from famine diseases ?—No; mostly from dysentery and diarrhœa.

You say the rations were not sufficient, and that you increased them ?—Yes.

In what particular respect was it insufficient ?—Both in quantity and quality. I gave them two chattaks more than the usual ration, and also gave them potatoes and onions.

What about their clothes ?—They were given clothing and blankets from charitable funds.

You give statistics showing the advantages of the modified or increased scale of rations, showing that the percentage of deaths fell off from 19·18 to 12·35 *minus* moribund cases ?—Yes, the diet was prescribed by the Civil Surgeon. The hospital accommodation was also meantime improved.

Did the number of infirm and sick also fall off ?—Yes, from 52 to 40 per cent., and there were more discharges.

Had you liberal allowance of extras ?—Yes, any amount freely given. Mutton, milk and other delicacies were supplied from special fund.

You say in your written evidence that "prevention of disease should be more aimed at than its cure." How would you carry that out ?—By having separate gangs, specially for the infirm. We made a mistake at first in not forming separate gangs.

I do not see any reason why you should not have treated these patients as you treat your ordinary patients in the hospitals ?—These were treated under the Code.

Yes. But would not the rules prevailing in charitable dispensaries apply in such cases ?—We had no authority to give rations as we liked.

But you had a free hand ?—Yes, for only hospital patients.

Any difficulty in disposing of the dead ?—We burnt them.

And Mohamedans ?—We buried them.

From where did your poor come ?—Forty-four per cent. from Jabalpur District, 20 per cent. from Central Provinces. 9 per cent. from North-Western Provinces and 25 per cent. from the Native States of Rewa and Mahiar.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—During the whole period ?—Yes.

(*Dr. Holderness.*)—When did you close your poor-houses ?—They are still going on.

How many at present ?—One hundred now. Out of this 50 are maintained from charitable fund. As we have no other accommodation for those maintained from charitable fund, they are kept there.

(*President.*)—Were people drafted from the poor-houses to the works before they were fit to be sent away ?—We made selections. An Assistant Surgeon always attended to it.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Did you send monthly returns of those who died of privation and starvation ?—Yes, but all cases of starvation are shown as privation, because they reached the poor-houses and received help there.

I think you said that the physical condition of the people was not bad in 1395. When did it become bad ?—It was bad from September 1896 to April 1897.

What facts have you to support that statement ?—The returns show that the district mortality was very high in that period.

Can you tell us when *Cancrum oris* first appeared ?—In the rains—July 1897.

Up to that you did not notice scurvy ?—No, only stray cases.

(*President.*)—In what month in 1896 did the death-rate begin to get higher than usual ?—September 1896. The death-rate in poor-houses was 4 per cent.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—When did the district death-rate get bad ?—September 1896. About 8 per cent. for the whole district. In Marwara it was 10 per cent.

Did you question the people as to the reason of their getting into such poor condition ?—Yes. They always said they had nothing to eat.

These moribund cases died of starvation ?—Yes.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—These poor-houses were supported from charitable funds ?—From September to March they were supported from charitable funds, and from district grant from April to October, and from November it became a Government concern.

You say in your written evidence that the unpopularity of poor-houses lies chiefly in the promiscuous huddling of castes. Did people come readily to your poor-houses ?—No, not readily.

Did many run away ?—No; I have known of cases in which the people who were discharged came back.

You recommend separate quarters and kitchens for different castes ?—Yes, they wanted separate kitchens. We separated different castes, and fed them separately.

Did they object to cooked food ?—Well, they wanted to cook themselves.

Did you house them separately ?—Yes, in different sites of the same barrack, separated by an enclosure. We put the Brahmins together, the Rajputs and other castes as we could best arrange, were separately housed. We had 9 per cent. of high caste people.

Had you sufficient grant from the Indian Charitable Fund for clothing and extras ?—Yes; plenty.

Brig.-Sur.-Lt.-Col. P. Cullen. 15th Mar. 1898.

BRIGADE-SURGEON LIEUTENANT-COLONEL P. CULLEN (*Retired I. M. S.*), Jabalpur, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

My connection with the late famine was in the distribution of the Mansion House Fund, *i.e.*, in gratuitous relief, and not in measures under the Central Provinces Famine Code. And as the Mansion House Fund was to supplement, and not in any way interfere with, relief given under the Famine Code, my remarks must be taken as showing the large extent to which it was found necessary to supplement the provisions of the Code.

I make no mention of the larger sum (R3,67,692-7-0) that was given to the agriculturists to enable them to resume cultivation of their lands, without which the Government must have incurred a similar expense, or this land, for at least another season, could not have been cultivated, and the district would not have derived any permanent benefit; nor would the distress have been materially relieved.

There has been no famine in these parts since 1879, and then the distress was in the south rather than in these parts, which were affected by high prices caused by large exportations rather than scarcity here. The Famine Code is largely framed on the experience then gained, but the circumstances were entirely different to what existed in 1897.

In 1879 the Railway had but just penetrated these parts, and the ryots were still ignorant of the methods of taking advantage of variation in prices in different parts. Exportations were small, and there was still a stock of food products stored in most villages on which the people were able to subsist. Besides which the famine of 1879 lasted but for one season, whereas that of last year had been gradually invigorating for four years, and merely reached its climax in 1897.

The past twenty years have greatly revolutionized the conditions of the country; facilities for travel and exportation have equalized prices all over the country, and greatly changed the economic condition of the people. The prices of all articles of consumption have risen, and *pari passu* wages have had to be increased; but while the labourers may be in no better state financially, the employer has to pay more for all descriptions of services than he did two decades ago.

These various circumstances must be taken into account before a comparison of the two periods of distress can be made.

Answer A.—I am not in a position to say what departure there was from the principles, *i. e.*, instructions of the Code, *viz.*, as to District Officers having from time to time reported the actual and varying conditions of their districts to the Local Government. But that this last famine was no sudden calamity that befell the localities many circumstances showed.

Brig.-Sur.-Lt.-Col. P. Cullen.

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(*a*) The fact that the Government found it necessary in 1894 to remit land revenue was a clear indication of the financial state of the cultivator class, and of their inability to meet a season of any great scarcity, and as each year afterwards the rabi, the principal crop, was almost a complete failure there should have been sufficient information to show the destitution that existed and the need for early Government help.

(*b*) There was also a further fact that certified to the existing distress in the numerous private charities that were stated to help the poorer classes that were congregating at all large towns; these were in such destitution that individual sympathy was largely called forth, and money freely given for their relief, long before Government took any measures in the same direction.

(*c*) A third indication of distress was the large emigration that took place, chiefly of the aborigines, a people it was most important to retain. These tribes almost exclusively inhabit the hill and forest tracts, and have generally such a love for their localities that nothing short of utter want will tempt them to leave their homes. The coolie emigration, although carried on to a small extent every year, was, during the last two years 1896-97, so large as should have attracted attention.

Answer B.—There is no doubt that when measures of relief were started, amelioration was rapid, and largely tended to save life.

But the period of distress had been so long that a large majority of the population was already reduced to semi-starvation and much reduced in stamina, and in very many cases unable to recover when assistance was given. And I have reason to believe that of the thousands who flocked to the relief-centres but very few could be entertained under classes A, B and C of the Code, or as at all able-bodied, but almost all fell under class *D*; but as their physical weakness was due to want of food, and not to disease, the allowance under Appendix III of the Code was insufficient.

In this district wheat is the staple food (except among the hill tribes, who grow and consume the smaller millets). Juari is but little cultivated, and rice is usually much the same price as wheat. The price of wheat for a long time was between 8 and 9 seers per rupee, and the money wage, and the calculated quantity of grain allowed under class *D*, would not give more than 12 to 10 chattaks of coarse flour, and there was nothing left to procure some small addition to make it palatable; nor was the quantity sufficient, in the condition of the recipients, to enable them to recoup their strength. That this was the impression of the relieving officers is shown by the larger demand made on the Mansion House Fund to supplement the allowance of the Code, as no less than 100,325 units of persons were given some addition to the diets of the Code. This does not include the orphanages, Government or Missionary hospitals, or distributions by private individuals and missionaries, which, if they could be ascertained, would exceed the number given above. Nor does it include those, chiefly agriculturists, to whom the 2,091 maunds of American grain was distributed. Nor the weak and delicate under the care of the Civil Surgeon, to whom numerous cases of Swiss Milk, Mellin's and Triticumen food were given. Nor the 10,629 persons who were enabled to buy grain at cheap rates from the cheap-grain shops; nor lastly, the 12,476 respectable poor to whom money doles to the amount of ₹20,209 were given.

This I fear goes far to prove that the wages under existing conditions were not adequate to the want of the workers.

The distribution of this charity was, I believe, done as economically as possible as the cost of the care and distribution of the ₹4,33,678-9-9 came to merely ₹1,158-4-6 or 0·267 per cent., which considering that much of this treasure had to be conveyed long distances, shows the amount of voluntary labour given to the work.

But I hardly understand the question "with regard to economy." If this means "Political economy," then as a country or district is most prosperous where its population is healthy and affluent, and as the ability to work means money, viewed in this light, there was a sad want of economy. For owing to the long period of distress, the people were reduced below par, and became as bad, or disordered, machinery, unable to work, and the loss to the country calculated on this loss of power was enormous.

Answer C.—In answering this question, I would again state I was not concerned with any duty under the Central Provinces Famine Code. But holding the supplemental purse I, as a looker-on, made inquiries and got all the information I could.

The formation of relief-centres under the Code presupposes that there is some work to be done in the locality. But I believe at the beginning work was not available at all, and much gratuitous relief was given, which attracted large numbers from long distances, and even from foreign territories, and afterwards when it was decided to exact work, although this was of the lightest description, it caused much grumbling, as the people thought the Relieving Officer was doing this on his own authority. This was a great mistake, as had task-work been exacted at first many of those who came from distances would have tried to eke out an existence at their own homes rather than come to work on a famine-wage, which barely and in many instances did not suffice to support them.

Then, again, much of the work done, and especially at the beginning was unremunerative. This could have been avoided, as there was plenty of work to hand.

The formation of large camps of people of this description, people semi-starved and many already diseased, is always a source of danger, as, on the occurrence of an epidemic among them, a very possible accident, it would be impossible to isolate them. Further, large camps require a large amount of supervision, not only for sanitation but to find out malingerers, and the really incapable; therefore larger camps are a mistake, unless the work be one that can pay for thorough supervision. Small works are not only much more easily supervised; but as a rule, more remunerative. For instance, if the thousands of this district collected at one place, from an area of about ten miles around had been given work in their own villages, there would not have been no danger from overcrowding, the people would have been more satisfied, there would not have been the desertions of families, or such loss of life in taking helpless women and children to the relief-centres, and the work for the village would have been really profitable and indirectly so for the Government. In every village there were wells to be cleaned out, tanks needing repairs, and the bunding up of fields, enough to have employed every available hand, and work that would have been willingly done by the people, and willingly and carefully supervised by the mukaddams and patwaris, who could be safely trusted to distribute the small sums allotted to each village, and this work could be easily checked by measurement, which would not need a larger number of superintending officers than is required for a large work.

This was an opportunity of doing an immensca mount of really profitable work in the district.

Answer D.—I have already given my opinion as to the line in which operations should be carried on should such an unfortunate occasion again occur.

(*President.*)—You have been residing at Jabalpur since your retirement?—Yes; for the last five years.

Do you travel about in the district?—Yes. I have nothing to do. I go about shooting.

When did you notice signs of distress in the district?—In 1896.

What time?—In the rains; I noticed people from the villages flocking into larger towns.

You did not notice that before?—No.

You say that the fact that Government remitted land revenue in 1894, the fact that private charities were started, and the fact that large emigration took place, all indicated famine. Did you make any personal inquiries on these points?—Yes, I did. I collected as much information as I could on all these points.

Have you any figures showing the amount of money collected here prior to the establishment of the Mansion House Fund?—Yes. The private subscriptions at Jabalpur and Sehora, and from the Church Missionary Society, Methodists and Wesleyans, amount to ₹22,378.

You say that the cooly emigration during the years 1896 and 1897 was so large as to attract attention. What class of people were they?—Kolcs, Gonds and all kinds of people. The cooly-catchers sent all classes of people they could get.

You say that the relief measures commenced very late, and yet you say you did not notice distress till October?—I was out of the service, and so I only noticed what was brought to my notice casually.

You had no opportunity of judging the sufficiency of rates paid?—No.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—You say in your written evidence that no less than 100,325 units of persons were given some addition to the diets of the Code. Was that on relief works or in poor-houses?—Both on relief works and in poor-houses, not in orphanages.

Were they in the shape of medical comforts?—No. In the shape of diet. Medical comforts were looked after by the Civil Surgeon. We gave something extra in the shape of milk, sago, extra feed of rice, etc.

Did you see to that yourself?—Yes. I used to receive the account of what was spent under each head. I merely compiled the accounts.

This extra expenditure was for the weakly and delicate?—Yes.

That would not prove that the rates were not sufficient?—The condition of the people was very bad.

Did you see their condition yourself?—Not all, but I know that not one was in good health.

Do you think small works are more easily supervised than large works?—Yes, that is the general opinion; they could be better looked after. Being small, they would be more clean.

Won't they require more supervision?—No unofficial supervision would be sufficient. The malguzars and mukkadams could manage them easily. The mukkadams, being their own superiors, would work honestly. Any amount of work could be done by unofficial supervision.

Did you see the famine of 1878-79 in the Central Provinces?—Yes; it was nothing like this. It was only one year's scarcity in these parts. The chief distress was in the south.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—You say 100,000 persons received some extras from charitable funds. Does this number include inmates of poor-houses?—I am not certain on that point; the returns were sent to me month by month, and I compiled them.

Can you say whether people on relief works received extras from the Fund?—It is difficult to answer that question; from the returns of the Circle Inspectors, under the head of extras, I find that tobacco, sago, etc., was given.

These extras were then given by officers in charge of relief works?—Yes.

Did you support orphans?—I had nothing to do with them. There were three mission orphanages. They had about 2,226 orphans in all there. We gave R5,252, towards their support from the Charitable Fund.

Can you say when private charity commenced?—No; individuals gave as they thought right. I cannot say when it really commenced.

What was the amount collected from private charity?—Rupees 22,378.

Up to what period?—Up to the commencement of the Mansion House Fund.

Brig.-Sur. Lt.-Col. P. Cullen.
15th Mar. 1898.

Could you say what amount the Municipal Committee spent?—

	R	a.	p.
Jabalpur Municipal Committee.	34,434	12	0
District Councils, Jabalpur and Marwara	7,750	0	0

(*Mr. Higham.*)—Do you think that small village-works are sufficient to employ every available hand?—I have been out of Government service for some time, and so I cannot speak with confidence on that point, but in course of my wanderings in the district I have spoken to the people, and they are of opinion that there is enough of work in the village, such as weeding, planting, cleaning wells and many other useful and necessary works. Many villagers having left the village, there was hardly anyone left to do these works.

Would it have been enough to employ every available hand for months?—Yes; larger villages would employ 100 or 150, and small villages 10 or 20.

Would they not run through such light work within a short time, and would there be no difficulty in selecting who should be left behind in the village to do such work?—Well, I cannot say if they would run through the work, but as regards selecting people who should be left behind, I do not suppose there would be any difficulty.

A great many witnesses have suggested that we should bring our relief works as close as possible to the villages. Do you think so?—At Barella (where I had been visiting a zenana school) I found that the people did not go to the works, although they were pretty near to the village.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Was the year 1897, after the setting in of rain, unusually an unhealthy one?—I cannot say. I was not in practice, but I know there was a good deal of sickness.

Was this a matter of remark or public talk?—Yes; I would say that, apart from famine, it was a year of unusual sickness.

We have heard that a particular kind of fever prevailed both among the well-to-do and the poor?—I know there was a good deal of fever among the troops stationed here.

Did you hear that a kind of relapsing or malarial fever prevailed?—No.

You do not think the fever was very specific?—No. Usually fever is aggravated by the condition of the people.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—You just said that much fever existed during the rains, that there was nothing particular about it, but the danger was that the people were underfed. Am I right?—No; I did not say that.

Was there any fever among those who were not underfed?—I have just said so.

Was it not a fact there was a great deal of fever?—Yes.

Did not the well-to-do, the Civil residents and officers suffer from it?—I have been speaking of the natives of the city.

Did you ever gather that the well-to-do were attacked with fever?—It was a common report that so-and-so was suffering from it and nothing more.

MR. J. B. LEVENTHORPE, Executive Engineer, Jabalpur, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

The outturn of work has varied so much that Q. 52 cannot easily be answered. The earthwork per unit varies from 3 cubic feet in the Damoh District to 45 cubic feet in the Chhattisgarh States Division. The metal broken from 0·3 cubic feet in Saugor to 4·0 cubic feet in Narsingpur. In the Jabalpur District the amount of earthwork varied from 4 to 16 cubic feet and of metal broken from 0·5 to 1·7 cubic feet.

The work done in the Jabalpur, Mandla, and Seoni districts will mostly be of permanent service to the community, and the roads made will be maintained. There are still many roads that could be made with advantage in all these districts.

Metal collection is an excellent form of work.

The tasks can easily be set and the work is easily supervised. The carrying by head loads of the metal from the quarry to the roadside is a good form of work for the numerous women and children who cannot break it.

I have had practically no experience of village tanks, impounding reservoirs and irrigation works as famine relief-works.

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The distance to which the distressed villager will go for work varies in every district and in different parts of the same district. In the Mandla district the Gonds and Baigas, as a rule, will not leave their villages even if a work is started within a few miles of them. In the Seoni District many of the people came from long distances and lived on the works. In parts of the Jabalpur District the people mostly came from villages fairly near to the works; while in other parts of the same district there were many wanderers and people from long distances on the works.

In many parts it would at first be difficult to get the people to move long distances by rail, but I see no reason why it should not be tried.

Residence on the works, *i.e.*, in the camps provided, has been the exception. Until the rains set in our camps, as a rule, were not much used. People preferred to make their own arrangements under trees away from the camps. When the rains set in they were glad enough to use our huts. Residence was not made a definite condition of relief. It would add to the work of the staff if it were so, and though it would keep away a good many who are not really in need of relief, it might keep others who are so away also.

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It would require a far larger establishment than could be got to have sufficient works to enable the majority of workers to return daily to their homes.

No reductions for "distance" were ever made in the tasks.

The cost of hutting cannot be given as it was lumped up with the cost of medical and conservancy. It varied on every charge. On some charges very little was done, on others the camps were purposely burnt down on account of cholera, and new ones made.

The health of the people was not affected by residence on the works. Blankets were only provided for the inmates of the hospital and kitchen.

Piece-work in one form or another is the only proper method of employing the able-bodied and especially at the beginning of relief-works, I would have all able bodied employed by contractors. With the establishment available, it is impossible in the first month or two to get proper tasks out of the able-bodied, although they are quite capable of doing them. They get demoralized and unwilling to work. On every work there should be three classes:—

(1) Able-bodied under a contractor.

(2) Feeble and weak under officer-in-charge on easy task-work on daily wages.

(3) Children under 7, and infirms who should be fed in the kitchen unfit for work.

The contractor can, if necessary, be dispenssd with when works have been going on for a few months, but at the commencement of the work he would be very useful.

It is easy to cut down the rates paid to the contractor or to piece-workers when it is found that able-bodied workers earn too much.

If piece-work gangs are formed of villagers from the same or neighbouring villages and they nominate their own man to receive wages, there are no complaints. I do not think there would be any difficulty in inducing people to attend work on the piece-work system if works on the task work system had not been previously been opened. In ordinary years when no agricultural operations are going on, people are glad enough to go to any work opened within a reasonable distance of their homes, and there to earn a little hard cash. If task-work is to be kept up, the simplest classification would be that proposed by Mr. Higham, *viz.*, X, Y and Z and children. I know of no reason why men and women doing the same task should not get the same wage. I agree with Mr. Higham that children from 12 to 16 should be paid as men and women. Children between 7 and 12 should be made to work. We found it a good plan to keep working children in separate gangs and not mix them up with the men and women. Able-bodied, who did not work properly if employed as they ought to be on piece-work, would get their penalty in their diminished earnings. Task-workers can best be punished with cooked food instead of any pay.

On one day of the week, either Sunday or bazar-day, there should be no work, only the kitchen people should be fed. I do not think it necessary to pay anything for Sunday. I consider that it is impossible to lay down any standard tasks, as circumstances vary so in different districts and even in different parts of a district.

Task-work gangs should be from 80 to 100 in number. If smaller, the number of gangs on a large work becomes very great.

In the Jabalpur District on several charges men left their women and children on relief-works and went off themselves, carrying grass or wood into Jabalpur or to field work. They found they could themselves earn more than they could on the relief-works.

All large works employing over 2,000 should be under the Public Works Department. The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner should have power to inspect, and if they find anything contrary to Code rules, to write the necessary orders in the Order Book kept at each charge. I consider that the Executive Engineer should be entirely responsible, and that the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner would practically assist him in inspecting the work and putting to rights things they might find out of order.

The Deputy Commissioner's assistants should have no power to give any order, but they would inspect and report to the Deputy Commissioner, who would send the reports on to Executive Engineer as was done in 1897.

After good Public Works subordinates the best men as officers-in-charge are Revenue Inspectors.

The officers-in-charge should undoubtedly be entirely under the Public Works Department. The officer-in-charge should control all matters connected with the camp, as conservancy, kitchens, bazars, etc. Divided control is fatal. In my opinion there is no need for magisterial power being given to officers-in-charge.

Wages should be paid daily to task-workers, twice a week to piece-workers. No *chalans* were required for new-comers except on one work to which inmates of the Jabalpur poor-house were sent.

The hill people of Mandla would not come to the works. The few that did would not stay for any time. From 2,000 to 5,000 should form a single charge. I strongly recommend that all non-working children should be fed and not paid.

(*President.*)—Were you the Executive Engineer, Jabalpur, throughout the famine?—Yes. I was in charge of Saugor, Damoh, Jabalpur, Mandla and Seoni. Seoni was added to my charge on the 1st June.

What works did you undertake?—At Jabalpur, Mandla and Seoni mostly road-works. We also had a large tank-work which we finished.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—Any earth-work?—Yes. Only selected gangs were put on it.

Did you select gangs for different works?—Yes. We selected men for metal-breaking, *murram* earth-work, etc.

Did they do the steam-rolling on the *murram* consolidation work?—No.

Is there any reason why you should not employ them on consolidation?—No. They can be employed on it during the rains.

Did you get cattle to drag the rollers?—Many were dragged by coolies.

Did that work satisfactorily?—Yes.

You collected metal?—Yes.

How far did you carry it?—Four miles.

Rather expensive: is it not?—Yes, but it keeps them employed.

You say you would have all able-bodied men work under contractors. Did you employ contractors?—In my division practically none.

Why do you say you would start work with the contractor?—With the work well in hand we can do away with him.

How many had you in a gang?—Ten to 80 or 100. Sometimes two or three families composed a gang. They nominated their own headman.

You sent weak persons on task-work?—Yes.

Then practically the greater number of your men were on task-work?—Yes. Piece-work had never a fair trial. We began it late.

When you had piece-work, what was the basis of fixing rates?—We gave 30 per cent. more than the ordinary rate rates, paid to the contractor.

You did not work on the supposition that they had a particular task to perform?—No. We gave on an average, 30 per cent. more than what they would get.

You mean that they had to work harder to get the same amount of wage?—I never went into that question.

Did the people like piece-work?—It varied; in some places they liked it, and in other places they would not take to it.

Did they earn a little more than B wage?—Well, I cannot say that, but they took their own time; they came when they liked, and went off when they liked.

Did they come on Sundays?—Yes.

At Seoni and Mandla you introduced piece-work, but at the request of the Deputy Commissioner you went back to task work. What was that for?—Because the mortality was rising.

On it some of the people were not earning enough?—Yes.

Did you give any relief to the children of piece-workers?—Any children who wanted to go to the kitchen could go there and get food.

Did the children of those on piece-work go to the kitchen?—I can't say. I understand not.

Was the system of payment by result introduced in your district?—That was piece-work when they earned the D

wage. It was on task-work they could earn the B or D wage. There was a maximum and minimum. The minimum was the D wage.

When you first introduced piece-work you had no minimum or maximum?—No, they could earn anything they liked.

How many months did you do piece-work?—It was introduced only on a few works for a short time.

When did the Deputy Commissioner ask you to revert to task-work?—In September.

That is, after you introduced the maximum limit?—Yes.

Did that make the work popular?—Yes. The intention was to lower the death-rate which was rising.

At the time when you were told to introduce task-work, you were working on the "payment-by-result" system?—Yes.

(*President.*)—In your written evidence you say task-work gangs should be from 80 to 100; if smaller, the number of gangs on large works become very great. Is there any inconvenience in having a large number of gangs?—The clerical labour would be great.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—I see you say in your printed evidence that the distance to which the distressed villagers will go for work varies in every district and in different parts of the same district. That would affect the number of works to be opened?—Yes.

Does it also vary with different classes of people?—Yes. In the Mandla District, for instance, the Hindus freely came to the works, but the Gonds would not come.

Are there any persons of the class of cultivators among the Hindus who would not come?—I think so.

In parts of Jabalpur?—Yes, those down in the Haveli would not come. As a matter of fact they were a very proud class.

Any other reason?—I think the works were not close enough for them. Those who did come went back.

Had you your works in long lines?—No; in all directions. They were scattered.

I thought the Deputy Commissioner asked you to revise the lists in order to scatter the works?—He asked me to revise the works: it was with the object of having the works on the roads as far as possible.

You say in Seoni people came from long distances, what parts?—Northern parts of the district.

Did the Jabalpur people live on the works?—Yes; a good deal.

Then what was the cause of their not doing so in other districts?—Well, in some cases we moved our camps for 20 miles; that kept away many people.

In Seoni they lived on the works?—Yes.

At Damori?—No. I can't say why they did not.

You say at Mandla Gonds and Baigas would not come to the works although they were started only a few miles away. Is it the same in ordinary times?—Yes. We have great difficulty in getting labourers there in ordinary times, and so we import our labourers.

Are there any districts in which the Gonds and Baigas work?—Some on the borders of Seoni near Balaghat came in October and November.

The only work there was the Katni-Saugor Railway?—Yes.

Do you think that work gave much employment to the people?—There was a good deal of earth-work.

Did it give sufficient relief?—I could not say.

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Would ordinary contract work carried on on the usual conditions give relief to the people during famine?—There is room for any amount of them, and if they could have taken as many coolies as they could get, they would have got employment for them.

The Deputy Commissioner, in his Nos. 2914, dated 31st October 1896, and 2975, dated 10th November 1896 (*vide* Monthly Report for November), issued certain instructions directing the separation of the able-bodied from the infirm. Were the instructions suitable?—That was exactly what we were doing.

Had you contractors?—No; nor a middleman. The people nominated their own mukkadams or headman. We had gangs.

(*President.*)—Were the infirm drafted to another charge?—No; we had the weak and able-bodied working side by side.

Up to what time did you work this system?—At Mandla up to the end of May. At Jabalpur up to June.

The original orders regarding piece-work were modified in May. Did that lead to a falling off in the number of workers?—Yes; in Mandla the numbers fell from 22,000 to 8,000.

Was that owing to the orders regarding piece-work?—Not altogether. A great many went back at the beginning of the rains. Then the death-rate began to rise, and so we went back to task-work.

Had you any complaint that the able-bodied man was not able to earn enough on piece-work?—I do not think so.

Did you offer to raise the rates fixed?—I do not think so.

Were the rates on piece-work raised to task-work rates?—Can't say.

Do you think it was proper to introduce piece-work at Mandla, where they had to deal with Gonds and Baigas?—They should have introduced piece-work from the very commencement.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—Do you recommend contractors?—Yes. It would be very foolish not to accept their assistance. We can never have a sufficient staff.

You say metal collection is an excellent form of work. Do you think the metal collected will last another ten years?—It will be sufficient for a number of years.

Would you put any limit?—Yes; 15 years.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—In answer to Mr. Higham you said piece-work gave way to task-work at Seoni and Mandla because the mortality was rising and because the wages earned were subject to the D limit, but was not the order reverting to task-work intended to attract people to the work, without reference to the wage question?—On piece-work 75 per cent. never earned more than D wage, and so I think the order had reference to the wage question.

In your experience was all the wage earned spent on food?—No.

In your written evidence you say residence was not made a definite condition of relief, but that during the monsoon the people were glad enough to use the huts. What proportion used the huts?—That varied. At Seoni about 60 or 70 per cent. availed themselves of the accommodation.

(*President.*)—Have you any theory as to what became of the wages earned by the people?—On a work with 5,000 persons the wage earned daily was ₹400, but not more than ₹250 found its way to the bania's shop.

Did they save the rest?—I do not think they lived on ₹250. They got food and other things from some other places.

MR. P. M. GREANY, Extra Assistant Commissioner, Harda, Hoshangabad District, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

The State relief adopted during the famine to save life were:—

(1) Relief works.
(2) Gratuitous relief.
(3) Poor-houses.
(4) Kitchens.
(5) Utilization of forests.

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2. The Missionaries opened out small relief works and also distributed charity to the distressed in money and grain. In addition to this the "Christian Mission" opened a shop in the town of Harda where grain could be had at a rate cheaper than that sold in the local market. The shop was open for about two months.

3. Tenants were assisted in the purchase of seed grain and plough cattle both for kharif and rabi sowings from charitable funds. A shop was established from the said funds at Dam

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jipura to help the hill tribes in purchasing food grain at a reasonable price. The reason for opening out this shop was that the local dealers, taking advantage of the hard times, raised their prices absurdly high, with the object of squeezing out from the hillmen the grants given to them from charitable funds for the purpose of sowing their lands. Damjipura is in the Kalibhit pargana and is inhabited by Potharia Korkus in distinction from the Mowashi Korku of the Nerbudda Valley.

4. In bad weather (as in the rains) access to Damjipura is most difficult. Grain can only be imported to this tract on bullocks or head loads. The biggest village in the taluka is Damjipura, which is to the south of Harda. For about 20 miles the path passes through high grass and dense forests, and many streams and rivers have to be crossed. The shop afforded some relief. The cost of taking the grain to the village of Damjipura was debited to charitable funds. Blankets and clothing were distributed from charitable funds to the poor classes on relief works and to those who could not leave their homes on account of old age & physical incapacity.

5. Small sums of money were eventually sanctioned and paid from charitable funds to the poorer classes, in order to enable them to purchase the necessary articles and to repair their houses after the close of the famine operations. Some of the persons relieved had been to relief works leaving their homes unprotected; being temporary structures they were partially destroyed. Some on account of the times being hard had sold their pots and pans. The money they received set them on their legs again and gave them a fresh start in life.

6. I had every opportunity of gaining a practical knowledge, as I was Famine Relief Officer for Harda and Seoni tahsils, which approximately represent half of the Hoshangabad district.

Gratuitous relief.

7. All the measures of relief were Code measures. But there was some departure from the Code in respect to persons gratuitously relieved. In hilly tracts the villages are small and there are both malguzari and forest villages. The latter are for the convenience of the Forest Department. The inhabitants of such villages are utilized in felling timber and putting out fires, etc. They carry on cultivation to some extent, and they are able to subsist from the profits of cultivation and the wage paid to them by the Forest Department when their services are requisitioned in the discharge of Government work.

8. In forest villages no mukaddam or patwari is appointed. Ordinarily the preparing of the register prescribed by Section 34 should be the duty of the Forest Ranger. He undoubtedly, from his association with the inhabitants, is the most suitable official to do it.

9. The hill tribes are very reluctant in taking advantage of the measures introduced for their relief. As long as they are able to get the edible products of the forest they will not leave their homes. In the monsoon months they begin to feel the pinch, as the supply then is exhausted.

They then flock into the villages bordering the forest. Some were fit to be sent to relief-works and others were not. Even those that were fit refused to go to relief-works. They generally urged as an excuse that they cannot leave their relations and friends behind. One could see from their appearance that they were suffering from privation, and it was perplexing at first as to the best mode of dealing with them. It was impossible to start small and useful works in isolated villages in the monsoons. We, however, got over our difficulties by putting them on money dole. It was arranged to pay those who were able to get back to their homes once a week, especially on market days. Those that were physically incapacitated were fed at kitchens or paid a daily allowance according to their circumstances.

10. In villages situated in the Haveli village relief can be effectively administered through the agency of the mukaddams. But the hill villages need a different treatment. In the first place access to their villages in the monsoon is hard to accomplish. As long as herbs are procurable in the forest they are tenacious of their homes. The herbs generally eaten by them are Kolu, Bahel Dardi, Chhota Dardi, Kolari Duda, and Cherotia. But when the stock is exhausted they realize their position and travel up to towns and villages. As a rule they are remarkably honest, truthful and slow at calculation.

Treatment of hill tribes as regards gratuitous relief.

11. To have them collected in large villages without any sanitary arrangements is to imperil the health of the inhabitants. Special measures should be taken to meet their cases. To deprive them of the money dole, because some of them are fit to work, would be cruel. In a very short time they would lose flesh, and we would then have pitiable objects forced by circumstances wending their way into towns and villages, and a number of them probably would die on the road.

In my opinion a responsible officer might be employed whose duty will be to visit malguzari villages in the forests and pay them the money dole in their homes. It would only be necessary to do this after the rains have set in and till the maize crop and early millets are ripe. This is the only way of saving a large number of the dwellers of the forest from gradual starvation.

Korkus and Gonds.

12. A Korku or Gond who lives in the forest has no reserve. He lives from hand to mouth and is easily imposed upon and cheated by petty traders. His produce is generally purchased beforehand, and the price he gets for it is very low. As long as he gets sufficient to eat and drink now and then he is contented and happy.

Inspection of relief works.

13. The Code prescribes no rule for the inspection of relief works under the direct management of the Department of Public Works. For a short time it was ruled that such works could not be inspected by Famine Relief Officers. This order was again altered and Famine Relief Officers were required to make frequent inspections.

I think the Code should specify the position of the Famine Relief Officer in respect to relief works under the management of the Department of Public Works. It is important that these works be constantly inspected and the work of the gang moharirs and mates closely watched and supervised. There is great room for dishonest officers to make money, and unexpected visits may bring to light the evil doings of the subordinates.

Forests.

14. Forets should be thrown open as early as possible for grazing cattle. The growth of grass depends on the rainfall, and when it fails it is a sure sign of the pasture failing. The scheme as to what forests should be opened for grazing should be prepared beforehand, and the District Officer should have the power to declare at once, when there is a failure what reserves are open. Any delay will result in serious l[oss] of plough cattle.

There was a serious failure of the grass preserves during famine and cattle were fed on the leaves of the Pipal and Bir trees.

Famine operations and their result.

15. In my opinion every effort was made to save life. Relief works no doubt gave sufficient employment to the labouring classes, and they earned a wage which kept them alive. All the measures adopted were satisfactory, and it would be difficult to devise any other method. I have talked the matter over and have heard the opinions of all classes of people (Native and European) and all agree that no better scheme could be developed. All praise the Government for the action taken.

Relief works.

16. The relief works were very popular, and it is almost certain that a proportion of persons who were on our works were decidedly not deserving of assistance. It is impossible to differentiate who is and who is not deserving, so it is safe not to interfere.

Piece-work.

17. The drafting from task to piece-work had a salutary effect in keeping off people who came to the works as a pastime and not because they were stinted in circumstances.

It is, however, a mistake to hand over the piece-work to a contractor. It was tried and the complaints against the contractor of dishonesty in measuring the work were general and frequent.

Wages.

18. The wage paid to the workers and the money doles to persons on village relief were adjusted to rates, which just gave them sufficient money to procure food to keep their soul and body together; but I consider that the amount was hardly adequate to fortify their constitutions against the inroads of disease. There was no extravagance.

The class of officers to be appointed in charge of relief works.

19. I would here like to express my opinion about the class of officers who were put in charge of relief works. I think it was a mistake to give these appointments to Naib-Tahsildars. As a rule they were unfit to hold charge of big works. No doubt they made capital office hands and kept their accounts well, but they entirely failed

to exercise a strict and continuous supervision over their subordinates, *viz.*, gang moharirs and mates. Some of the charges were held by officials who were taken from offices, and these proved themselves quite unequal to the work. Most of them feared to make themselves unpopular to their subordinates lest false charges should be trumped up against them. In my opinion, if all the charges had been held by European officers the expenditure would have been kept down and with better result. The gangs had little or no respect for the orders of the Officer-in-charge, and fines for short work were very much resented, and the impression amongst the workers was that it went into the pockets of the underlings.

Gang Muharrirs.

20. A better class of people should be employed as gang moharirs and they should be fairly well paid, and as an inducement for them to work honestly they should be promised according to their qualifications permanent appointments as vacancies occurred in Government offices, provided their work was satisfactory.

Census of the labouring classes.

21. Experience shows that the labouring classes suffer most severely during famine. It is essential to know the number in each village. The patwari maintains an occupation register for his circle. They can with very little trouble prepare a record for the villages in their circle, showing the number of the labourers and enter the same in the register of occupation; this record could be corrected from year to year. When serious scarcity is imminent each patwari should be called upon to give the numbers of his circle through his Relief Inspector; we would then have a fair idea of the number in each Relief Inspector's circle. The totalling of the Relief Inspector's figures for the tahsil would give the number of labourers in the tahsil. I think it is important to know this, as fairly correct estimates could be prepared.

Signs that set in when famine is about to approach.

22. The famine for 1896-97 had its own characteristics. For the previous two years the crops had been short. The principal grain sown in the Harda and Seoni tahsils is wheat, and if we have two inches of rain in the latter end of October the crop does well, otherwise the yield is poor.

In 1896 the kharif crops failed totally in some parts and partially in other parts. In November and December 1896 there was a complaint that labour was scarce and there was a general exodus of the labouring classes. Prices rose, resulting in exportation of food grains. A village to village inspection showed that the poor in the village were living upon Jhengru (a plant which grows on old fallow land and is a species of grass) and herbs. The private employers of labour were not able to pay the same wage. The usual wage paid in ordinary years for unskilled labour is 2 pies of grain. Owing to competition a labourer could be had for a pie of grain or even less.

The mainstay of the village labourer is what he earns in the rabi harvest and this keeps his family going all through the monsoon months. The tenants said that they could not employ labour in the harvest season of 1896-97, and would as far as possible cut their own crops. The malguzars, who largely employ labour to cut the crops of their home farms, were unable to pay the same wage, as a very short crop was expected. The rabi crop looked poor, and in many fields the seed sown failed to germinate owing to the absence of moisture in the soil. These circumstances clearly indicated that famine was imminent. What we learn then is this: that a partial failure of crops accompanied with a general exodus from the district and high prices are fair signs of an approaching famine. Before famine sets in the mode of living of the poor is also altered. Due to the high prices they are unable to purchase a sufficient quantity of food stuff and have to resort to herbs and species of grass rice to make up the deficiency.

It is then important to take early steps and it is only by taking steps in time that we can cope with famine successfully. It is no use waiting till the people are actually starving. To save life we should feed the people up and keep them in fair condition till better times. If the people are in good physical condition we will be able to dispense with famine operations at an early stage, *i.e.*, as soon as the prices fall and labour is in demand.

Policy recommended in adopting village relief in preference to relief works in the monsoon.

23. I do not advocate the maintaining of relief-works during the monsoon months. It is almost impossible to take a proper task from the workers. If it is urgently necessary to keep up a few of these works, then I think the camps might be confined to 1,000 workers in each relief work.

It is far more satisfactory to give all those who cannot get labour in their villages gratuitous relief. By doing this we keep the people in the villages, and there would be a decided diminution in the death rate. You save them from exposure. In their own villages they are able to get the same home comfort as they have been accustomed to. Then there is another advantage: as demand for labour appears we are able to weed off the people from gratuitous relief.

24. It is my opinion that a famine could be more economically managed by the adopton of village relief and the abolition of relief-works in the monsoon months.

People who are away from their homes do not realize the signs that set in when famine is on the wane. They have little or no knowledge of the crops of their village, and when a relief-work is disbanded in closing famine operations they become despondent; and many instead of going back to their villages wander about large towns and perish from cold and other disease.

Madras famine.

25. I was in the Madras famine in 1877, and comparing what was done in 1877 with what was accomplished in 1897, I can certainly say that the present famine was better managed. Deaths from privation in the Madras Presidency were of frequent occurrence, and special gangs had to be entertained to patrol the roads to bring in bodies found by the roadside, and also those suffering from privation. The latter were taken to the poor-houses.

Our arrangements here were fairly perfect, and we had not to resort to this expedient. There is another thing that I observed in the Madras famine, *viz.*, that a large number of the labouring classes were very much emaciated.

26. Side by side with village relief we might maintain large kitchens for those in distressed circumstances. These kitchens should be established at certain centres where food should be distributed daily to children as well as adults.

27. I maintain that to cope with famine effectively the following State measures should be adopted:—

(1) In winter and summer months relief works under European Officers.

(2) In the monsoons all relief works should be closed, but if it is necessary to keep some of the works open in order to finish them off, then the numbers should be extensively reduced, and only as many of the labourers should be kept on as are needed for the work. The rest should be drafted to village relief.

(3) Village relief should be given to all persons who cannot get employment; a gradual process of weeding to be adopted as demand for labour appears.

(4) The establishment of kitchens at certain centres where one good meal might be given to all applying for the same.

Seed grain.

28. Before closing this all-important subject I would bring to notice that in a famine year there is always a difficulty in getting seed grain for tenants.

Our banias would be only too willing to meet our request if we have some summary mode of realizing the loans for seed grain. When the time for sowing arrives the tenant is very penitent and is ready to promise all sorts of things, but when the crops are ripe he tries his best not to pay his sowkar.

The procedure of the Civil Court is too cumbrous, and if the defendant elects he can always cause a delay, and eventually when the decree-holder gets a decree the tenant has got rid of his crops and the decree becomes waste paper.

(*President.*)—Were you in the Hoshangabad District throughout the famine?—From December 1896 to the end of the famine. I am still in that district.

Do you think there was a failure of crops in 1895-96 and 1896-97?—Yes, I think in the two preceding years we had short crops.

You are stationed at an out-station?—Yes, I am in charge of the Harda Tahsil.

Does that include any hill tracts?—Yes, it includes Raja Borari and Damjipura.

How much grain was taken to Damjipura from charitable shops?—About 300 maunds.

Mr. P. M. Greany.

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What measures were tried to induce hill tribes to come to the works?—We opened road work close to them at Desli, but they kept to their homes.

Could not anything have been done for them by personal influence? Could you not induce their leading men to move in the matter?—Yes, every attempt was made, but when they did come, unfortunately cholera broke out and they ran away.

When did you start the work at Desli?—In the early part of the monsoon under forest officers; it was in July 1897.

Before that nothing was done?—We had gratuitous relief.

Did the people come to the works?—No. When we saw people would not come we started some other work for them, but their attitude remained the same.

What kind of works?—Merely levelling the road. They would not come, but eventually they were forced to come out by starvation, and even then they refused to go to work. Eventually we put them on money doles.

What is the cause of their reluctance to go to the works?—I think they don't like to mix with people of the plains.

Did the plains people treat them with contempt?—No. They think that the plains people are cunning and that they will be cheated.

Your opinion is that they should be left in the jungles so long as they can subsist on the jungle products and that they should be given doles afterwards?—Yes. We should give them money doles in their own villages.

How many villages would there be?—About 80 villages with 5,900 persons.

Are these people increasing?—I think they remain almost the same. I have not noticed any increase among them.

I see you recommend that forests should be thrown open for the grazing of cattle; was there much mortality among the cattle?—Yes, a certain amount.

Were not the forests thrown open for grazing?—Yes, they were.

In what month?—I do not remember.

You say in paragraph 16 of your written note that a proportion of persons who were on the works were decidedly not deserving of assistance; was that proportion large?—No, I do not think it was large. It is also very difficult to differentiate who is deserving and who is not.

You mean a certain number of people could have got on without coming to the relief works?—Yes. I am referring to a class of people who think that these works are a big picnic; they come, stay for a short time and then go home.

It is not a pleasant picnic?—It is a novelty.

From what you saw on the works you think the wage sufficient?—Yes.

You think if it did not make them strong it kept them going?—Yes.

In paragraph 20 of your note you speak of gang-moharirs; who are they?—Hangers-on to the Public Works Department contractors. I am not sure whether they were relatives of the subordinate members of the Public Works Department.

Your impression was that they were corrupt?—Yes, very.

Did they cut something from the wages of the people?—That was not their *modus operandi*. The wages of the people were paid weekly; then there was a column showing absentees, fines, etc: now this money went to the pockets of these gang-moharirs.

When did village inspection begin?—In April.

You had lists made out for these villages?—Yes; first by the malguzars, then by Circle Inspectors, and lastly by the Revenue officer.

Reliable lists?—Yes, fairly.

In paragraph 21 you propose having a census of the labouring classes?—Yes, that will be very useful. It is very difficult to know the labouring classes. The patwari generally keeps the occupation register in his village, and it would be useful to show the number of labourers in the same register.

You would include coolies in that?—Yes.

Would you include weavers?—They would be shown under the head of "artizans."

In paragraph 22 you speak of the general exodus of the labouring classes; where did they go to?—They drifted from place to place, and even visited Native States. The coolie-catcher got as many as he could.

How long after that were relief measures taken?—Relief measures were taken in January, and the exodus was noticed in November and December.

Had you noticed signs of distress before that?—Well the kharif crop had failed, but it was expected that the rabi crop would be better.

Any particular signs of distress in 1896?—Not in my part of the district.

In paragraph 27 (4) you suggest the establishment of kitchens at certain centres where one good meal might be given to those applying for the same; would not that lead to a great many people not requiring it coming to the kitchen?—Yes, a certain proportion would come, but that would be very small, because there is a general objection to cooked food, and so only those in real need would come.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—I gather from paragraph 17 of your written evidence that piece-work was very unsatisfactory in your district. When was it introduced?—I am speaking of Harda and Seoni. Piece-work was introduced in September on the Harda-Handia Road. The people complained that the contractor substituted large baskets, and there were always complaints about measuring the work done.

What was the result?—I reported the matter to Mr. Laurie, the Commissioner. He visited the works along with the Executive Engineer. The Executive Engineer after enquiring changed the rule.

Did piece-work drive away people who should have remained on the works?—Yes.

That was the first time piece-work was tried?—Yes; I think it would have been better if it had been carried out departmentally.

When piece-work was started were weakly people separated?—Yes. They were separated by the Hospital Assistant and the officer in charge.

Had you task-work and piece-work side by side?—No. At a distance of 3 miles.

Were families separated?—It was avoided as much as possible. There were no complaints.

What was the result of piece-work?—The people did not earn enough and consequently left.

Did you give rewards?—I was against the system of giving rewards; it was stopped.

Did the managers get the people to do their full task?—If the mate (head man) and gang-moharir looked after them they worked all right, not otherwise.

Are the works executed in your tahsil useful?—Yes. We have completed one feeder road and one trunk road, both useful. The Harda-Handia road is not well done.

In paragraph 23 of your written evidence you recommend village relief in preference to relief works during the monsoon. Does your recommendation refer to your tahsil or to the whole district?—My experience is confined to my two tahsils. During the monsoons hutting arrangements were unsatisfactory, and so it is better to provide the people with work in their own villages.

Do you think their health suffered in the rains?—Yes.

Did the people reside in the camps?—Most of the workers went home, but those from long distances remained on the works. Large numbers remained on the works.

All through the rains?—Yes.

Did you extend gratuitous relief during the rains?—Yes.

You think you brought relief to every deserving person?—Yes.

Was there any difficulty in deciding as to who was deserving to be put on relief?—I have been in the Harda Subdivision for the last nine years, and so I did not find any difficulty in settling that point.

What was the percentage on gratuitous relief?—Two per cent.

If you had not the works would 2 per cent. be sufficient?—No, it would have gone up to 20 per cent.

(*Mr. Bose*).—The wage you refer to in paragraph 18 of your note is the D wage, is it not?—Yes.

Did they save anything out of that wage?—No. The price of grain was 6 to 9 seers a rupee, and so I do not think it was possible for them to save anything.

How did you calculate the D wage?—The Deputy Commissioner fixed the rates.

On what grain?—*Jowari.*

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—Was the condition of the people fair during hot weather?—Yes.

What wages did they earn?—The D wage.

Was that sufficient?—During the hot weather it was sufficient.

What was their condition?—It was fair.

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You never reported that the people were insufficiently fed?—No.

Was there any difficulty in getting copper coins—pice?—No.

Any premium?—Yes, I think something like 5 per cent.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—Did the people get mahua to live on?—Yes, lots.

(*President.*)—On what do they live?—On a mixture of mahua and wheat.

At the Commissioner's Court, Jabalpur.

THIRTY-FIFTH DAY.

Wednesday, the 16th March 1898.

PRESENT.

SIR J. B. LYALL, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I. (PRESIDENT.)

SURGEON-COLONEL J. RICHARDSON.
MR. T. W. HOLDERNESS, C.S.I.
MR. T. HIGHAM, C.I.E.
RAI BAHADUR B. K. BOSE, C.I.E.
MR. J. B. FULLER, C.I.E. (*Temporary Member for the Central Provinces*).

MR. H. J. MCINTOSH, *Secretary.*

Surgeon-Colonel G. HUTCHESON, Sanitary Commissioner and Administrative Medical Officer, Central Provinces, called in and examined.

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(*President.*)—You are chief of the medical staff in the Central Provinces?—Yes.

How long have you had that appointment?—Since July 1896.

Have you had experience in other districts of these provinces?—In the early part of my career I was in Jabalpur.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—I think you have visited other districts of these provinces during 1896?—Yes.

What impression did you gather during your tour of the condition of the people?—My impression was that the physical condition of the people in the district of Saugor, which I visited early, and of that of the people in Jabalpur was not good. I saw cases of emaciation during my tour in Jabalpur.

(*President.*)—In what month?—In September 1896.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—What measures were being taken to deal with these cases?—The measures, so far as I am aware, were mostly through district councils and private charity.

Was it your opinion that measures were adopted sufficiently early and on an adequate scale to deal with the conditions?—I had not been long enough in these provinces to come to a satisfactory conclusion on the point. As I had seen the operations in the North-Western Provinces I was a little surprised that measures had not been taken earlier and more actively.

Is that a correct description on page 3 of the memorandum on the public health of the Central Provinces in 1896-97 and previous years, where it says that matters culminated in widespread distress and privation early in 1896 and deepened rapidly into extensive famine before the close of that year? Is that correct as to time and area?—It is only from the historical record. It is not my personal observation.

You say that early in 1896 distress and privation were widespread?—That is shown from the Civil Surgeons' reports.

The Civil Surgeons' reports then are your authority for this statement?—Undoubtedly.

Then in 1895 I see in some districts emaciation and debility prevailed amongst many. Do you think the state of matters described continued till it culminated in the famine of 1896-97?—Yes.

This condition of things prevailed through from 1895 to the end of 1896?—Undoubtedly in the northern Provinces and the districts bordering on the Gangetic water-shed.

I presume you consider these conditions called for active measures of relief?—My opinion is that if relief was necessary in Bundelkhand it was also necessary in the northern Provinces.

In paragraph 11 you repeat this description. Was the condition of things mainly confined to the northern districts?—In 1895 it was confined to the northern districts.

You say in Bhandara and Balaghat people had begun to wander?—That is the statement of the Civil Surgeon. It is qualified by the fact that people began to wander on account of the necessity for sustenance and employment.

With reference to paragraph 12, do you think the circumstance of the lowest birth-rate and highest death-rate would sufficiently prove that the people were suffering to an exceptional degree?—Undoubtedly.

In paragraph 17 you give figures showing that the death-rate was excessively high in 1896 in Damoh, Saugor, Mandla, Murwara, Seoni and Jabalpur. To what, in your opinion, was the high death-rate mainly due?—It was due to the weak physical condition of the people.

And what was the weak condition due to?—Due to seasons of distress.

Were the measures taken commensurate with the prevailing condition of distress in 1896?—I only came in July. At that time I was not sufficiently acquainted with the provinces to give a positive answer. I was not informed of the measures taken. There was no record in my office. During the last three months I thought there was evidence of considerable distress and privation in the Jabalpur and Saugor districts.

You think the great mortality in towns was due to an influx from Native States. These emigrants were, I suppose, in a starving condition in search of food?—No doubt.

Was the proportion very great?—In Murwara (from the adjoining States) I think the proportion at one time amounted to 60 per cent.

In paragraph 28 you say the infantile mortality was higher in 1896 than in any previous year. To what was this due?—You can only reason from the record that it was due to privation.

Did they suffer more than adults?—Considerably more so.

In paragraph 33 you say, on the 23rd January 235,000 were already on relief works or gratuitously relieved. Can you say when the relief works were opened?—So far as I am aware they began about the end of November and beginning of December 1896.

There must have been a great rush?—There was a great rush at first; the numbers increased rapidly from 500 to 4,000 within a week.

What did you reason from that?—The need for relief.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—What work was that?—The Hutwas-Piparia work.

When did this great increase take place?—At the beginning of December.

Had it just been opened?—Yes.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—In paragraph 35 you say numerous large works under the Public Works Department, combined with poor-houses and rural relief centres for wanderers and those temporarily unfit for labour, with village house-to-house relief, were organized. Can you say when these were

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organized?—This paragraph is more or less an extract from an official report.

In paragraph 37 you give a table of the death-rate. In August 1897 the number became excessively high and ran up from 61,445 in July to 80,785 in August. To what cause do you attribute this sudden increase in the death-rate?—Owing to exposure in the monsoon weather of people in a debilitated condition.

Had the people on works proper shelter?—In many cases considerable attempts were made to shelter them, but it was often insufficient.

You visited these works I suppose?—Yes.

In what respect were shelters insufficient?—The ground is moorum and cotton soil and retentive of moisture, so, unless huts are pitched on high ground, they get supersaturated and the rain tells on the condition of the shelter.

Was the task excessive on the works you visited?—I don't think it was beyond the capabilities of the workers, except in so far as piece-work is concerned. I don't think piece-work is adapted to people in a weakly condition.

Did the people suffer from insufficient food? Was the wage sufficient to keep them?—Seemingly not, because in the monsoon towards August and September there were reports from various officers that the condition of the people was deteriorating.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Why in the monsoon?—The diet was not sufficient. There was not enough fatty food for health.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Was the clothing deficient as well as food?—Undoubtedly.

Referring to the table appended to paragraph 37 of the note, as far as I can judge, taking the mortality for the first four months of 1896 and comparing it with the same months of 1897, if you take the mortality as a ground for judging of the distress, the distress was about the same in both years?—I would not go as far as that. Very many weakly persons must have succumbed in 1896.

If 1896 had been a normal year you could make that statement?—The rates both in 1896 and 1897 were excessively above the normal.

And were they due to the same cause?—Undoubtedly.

As regards paragraph 40, I don't understand the remark that registration was more accurate and imperative than it had been?—Orders were issued that the records should be as complete as possible. All officers connected with registration and minor officials were warned that accuracy was the chief object.

What effect had that on statistics? Do you think more deaths were recorded than in other years?—The record was quite as accurate as in former years.

You cannot gather from this that more deaths were reported?—Undoubtedly not.

With regard to the remarks in paragraph 43, page 29, under the heading "June," that is June 1897, is it not?—Yes.

You say there that the condition of the people on relief works was actually deteriorating?—That is the report of the local officer.

You say this was explained by a diminution in numbers and an apparent residuum of weakly persons. Why did the numbers decrease?—At that time there were some big fairs on.

In the same paragragh you say there was difficulty in procuring food-grains in Mandla?—That is the report of the local authorities, not from my own knowledge.

You don't know how this came about?—No.

Similarly, on page 30, under "July," you say that privation continued in Mandla, but the relief measures must have been in full swing then. Why did it continue?—I fancy there were difficulties in Mandla on account of its inaccessibility.

Do you think that would account for this continued acuteness of distress?—Yes.

Was there any other difficulty?—Exposure was the great difficulty, and the people thought it would be better to repair to their villages. In Mandla the inacessibility rendered it difficult to provide relief if it had not been previously applied.

In paragraph 48 you say there is a stage in the downward progress of those whose food has been habitually insufficient, from which recovery is impossible. Is that the result of your own observation?—I think it is hopeless in certain cases, but not certainly impossible.

Practically it comes to the same thing?—Yes.

Would you attribute such deaths to starvation?—To long privation.

On page 41, in paragraph 59, regarding mortality, you give the castes of the people and the death-rate amongst them. How is it that the death-rate amongst those described as "others" is more than double?—These are the waifs and strays of society who are neglected, and they are more liable to the vicissitudes of climate. It includes a large number of aborigines who certainly suffered much more acutely than others during the late famine.

What was the cause of their suffering more?—Privation.

Why out of proportion to others?—Because they had nothing to fall back upon. The more or less better classes have something to fall back upon, but the aborigines have no ornaments or other things.

Are they more averse to avail themselves of help than other people?—I think so. They show a greater timidity in coming to relief works and dealing with Europeans.

As regards paragraph 65, are these figures correct? You say the mortality was about treble in 1897?—The figures are taken from the official record, the Sanitary Commissioner's report.

In paragraph 5 of the memorandum on the medical arrangements during the famine in the Central Provinces in 1896 and 1897, you describe the instructions given to preserve the water-supply in a state of purity. Were these measures effectual in preventing outbreaks of cholera?—Not altogether.

Were there many such outbreaks?—Cholera was very prevalent in 1896 and 1897.

In what months?—The usual months in these Provinces; in May and June, just before the monsoon.

You say there was difficulty in disposing of dead bodies. Was that on works?—I don't think there was any difficulty on the works. They were never so numerous.

Were the bodies of Hindus burnt?—No doubt.

And of Mahomedans?—The order was that they should be buried. I think these instructions were carried out.

Were any measures taken to prevent effluvium?—It was ordered that lime should be used.

Was it used as a matter of fact?—I fancy in the monsoons it would be rather difficult to keep up the supply.

As regards what you say about food on page 4, was unsound food frequently detected?—It did not come to my notice. I think the food was good.

You don't think the health of the people suffered owing to an inferior supply?—No; there was a large import of Burma rice, but it was not considered palatable for the people of these Provinces unless cooked under steam.

Was it mere prejudice or a conviction founded on fact?—They afterwards took to it readily.

Had you sufficient hospital accommodation?—I should think excellent.

You got a free hand in purchasing medicines and medical comforts I suppose?—Quite free.

You say in paragraph 7, on page 5, regarding the prevention of outbreaks of cholera, the provision of isolation hospitals and the maintenance of a strict watch against the possible introduction of infectious disease. Was this found to prevent the introduction of infectious disease?—I think so; with the exception of cholera there was no infectious disease.

How did cholera find its way into camps?—It was due to the polluted water-supply. In the Deccan there is a good deal of vegetable matter in the water. I think the cholera microbe thrives in these waters. Most of the Deccan water is taken from *bowlis* or wells which are extremely polluted.

Did you attempt to purify this water?—Yes, with permanganate of potassium.

What is your opinion of the efficiency of permanganate of potassium as a process for the purification of water?—It is a useful process I think, but inert as regards the prevention of cholera due to unprotected water-supplies. Re-infection frequently occurs and the water is as bad as ever.

You speak in paragraph 8 of relief kitchens in connection with relief hospitals for children. When were these kitchens

started? Can you say?—No, I cannot give the date: about the middle of the year.

Do you think it would have been better if they had been opened earlier?—Undoubtedly.

You say in paragraph 11 that the poor-house ration, as prescribed in the Code, is scarcely sufficient to maintain health and strength?—Undoubtedly it is insufficient.

You altered it?—It was altered.

Instead of 8 chattaks of atta or rice you gave 9 to 10?—Yes.

That is less than the jail ration?—Yes, it is still less.

And the quantity of albuminous food (dhal) was raised from 1 to 1½ chattaks and vegetables were raised very greatly?—Yes, the people were suffering from scorbutic affections.

Was there any difficulty in getting vegetables?—Not of the ordinary class, but there was not a sufficiency of anti-scorbutic vegetables.

You say in paragraph 12 that successful treatment was not more apparent in the use of extraneous and peptonized food-stuffs than in the issue of the simple forms of milk diet, soup and gruels? Was there any difficulty in getting milk?—At times there was in getting the quantity required. It was supplemented by Swiss milk, of which there was an abundance. The Charitable Relief Fund distributed a good deal of Mellin's Food.

On page 8 in paragraph 13 the first line of figures in the statement showing the daily average population in the Jabalpur poor-house shows that the number in the month of June was 363, in the next month it practically doubled, and rose till it reached a maximum in January 1897. Did this serve as a practical proof of the condition of the people in and around Jabalpur?—It serves as a proof that the Jabalpur District was as badly off as the adjacent districts. When distress became acute, Government came to the aid of the District Councils.

As early as July 1896?—I think Government aid came in.

You say on page 11 in paragraph 14, "here as elsewhere in poor-houses overcrowding has occurred to a very great extent, and in the small enclosure for females it is excessive." Would it have been necessary if proper arrangements had been made to have crowding in excess?—The numbers came in so rapidly that adequate provision could not be made for excess numbers. The actual accommodation was limited to the number present, and no provision was made for a large influx.

Should this have been made?—Undoubtedly.

In fact a hand-to-mouth policy was being followed?—Yes.

As regards this report on the Bilaspur Orphanage, you say on page 12, under the head "B.—Orphanage," the orphans generally presented a tidy and cleanly appearance?—Yes; great care had been taken by Dr. Silcock.

Did many die?—Yes; but the mortality was not as great as in many other poor-houses or orphanages.

At the bottom of page 13 you say, in regard to poor-houses, rum was freely used as a stimulant when "kangals" were brought in daily wet and cold, like half-drowned rats. Did they mostly die?—No; provision in Bilaspur was excellent, and you will see from the note by Dr. Silcock, in which I entirely concur, that milk and soup were provided, and that the attendance was very good.

Was the medical staff sufficient?—Not altogether sufficient. There was a great strain on the staff. It was impossible for other provinces to assist us, but on the whole, I think, the establishments met the conditions fairly well. It was supplemented by experienced subordinates of the compounder and vaccinator class.

Was the vaccinator class fairly efficient?—Yes; on the whole. Some had to be discharged for irregularities.

(*President.*)—Have you formed any opinion as to the sufficiency and quality of the relief work ration?—The quality seemed good enough, and I think the quantity, on the whole, sufficient to maintain people if they came to the works in fairly good physical condition.

You are alluding to the D ration I suppose?—Yes; a memorandum was placed on record after inspecting the Relief Camps in the Banda district in 1896 by the District Officer, the Superintending Engineer and myself to the effect that we found the people in fairly good condition and fit to return to their labours in the fields as soon as relief work was over.

I understand you to say that it is sufficient to keep a man going, but not to improve his condition?—Yes, undoubtedly.

That D ration is considerably under the ration given to prisoners in jails?—Yes; prisoners in jails take on flesh very rapidly. They come in low condition and improve rapidly.

Do you think the people on relief works supplement their ration in any way?—Not to my knowledge. They are so poor that I don't think they have the means to.

I see in the Medical Officer's Report of the Damoh Jail of 1896 that ⅔rds of the prisoners admitted were in bad health; 426 were suffering from some form of scurvy. Did you go to the Damoh Jail when you first came?—Yes.

What condition did you find the prisoners in. Do you remember?—It is recorded in my report. I cannot remember at this moment. I may mention that the term scurvy is a relative term. There is a great deal attributed to scurvy which is really not scurvy in the sense in which we use it elsewhere.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Does that condition prevail among the lower orders in ordinary years?—Yes. In the North-Western Provinces and Lower Bengal nearly always.

When did you leave the North-Western Provinces in 1896?—In July.

When did you last visit relief works there?—In June.

And the condition of the workers was specially reported on?—Yes; by the District Officer, the Superintending Engineer and myself as stated.

They were considered to be in good condition, were they not?—Yes.

Did they actually improve?—Yes.

The wage they received you consider was sufficient to actually improve them?—Yes.

Do you know whether the relief workers saved any portion of their wage?—Undoubtedly. An attempt was made to ascertain that fact in several ways, and it was found that they had saved.

The children were not fed in kitchens, were they?—No.

Did the parents get separate gratuitous relief?—Yes.

Did they keep their children in good health?—Yes.

Do you know how they spent their wages?—They bought food from the bania.

What class of food did they buy? Did they gather mahua?—I don't think so.

When you came to these Provinces, you visited Damoh and Saugor?—Saugor at once.

As regards the general condition of the people, do you think there was the same amount of distress in Saugor as in Bundelkhand?—I think more. In the short visit I paid I saw much more.

You said, I think, in answer to a question by Dr. Richardson, that in the beginning of the rains the people had deteriorated owing to a deficiency of fatty foods?—There was a deficiency of nutritious food, which is necessary to support the physical condition of the people during exposure.

Does that apply to relief workers?—Yes; the relief workers were deteriorating.

(*Mr Fuller.*)—On what date?—About July and August. Of course people in that condition require more food—and nourishing food—at that time owing to exposure.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Do you think the wage given in the hot weather might prove insufficient during the rainy months?—I should be inclined to give more food in the rainy weather; in other words, raise the wage.

What was the condition of the people then. It would depend on the length of time they had refrained from seeking relief?—I think it was due to weather conditions. August is the worst month in the year in these Provinces. The highest mortality is between August and September.

Did you inspect any of the workers during June and July?—During July.

Did you hear that the strong workers had gone away leaving a residuum of weakly people?—There was a strong tendency to get rid of relief workers, so that they might go to their fields and attend to cultivation.

The tendency was to alter the condition of relief works?—Undoubtedly. I think an order issued about that time on the subject.

Did you form any opinion as to the wisdom of this order?—I think it was inadvisable.

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Why?—Because the people had been in an exhausted condition for many months, and until food-stuffs came into the market they were not in a fit state to be sent back to their occupations. They had no stocks to fall back upon.

Did you consider the conditions on which relief was given during the rainy months were too deterrent?—I I have not formed an opinion.

You visited Bilaspur in July; what was the opinion you formed as to the extent and depth of distress?—It was very severe.

Do you know what it was due to?—I saw more distress and emaciation at Bilaspur than in any other parts of the Province.

Can you give any description of what you saw?—There were large numbers in the poor-houses and cases of excessive emaciation and distress were numerous and a system of bringing numbers to centres of relief had to be adopted.

Was that due to persons refusing to come to relief works?—Yes, to some extent.

Were the works not sufficiently distributed?—I am not able to say.

How many people were there in the Bilaspur poor-houses?—About four or five thousand.

Is the collection of so many people undesirable on medical grounds?—Not if the arrangements are good and if the accommodation is well distributed. If sanitary measures are taken with regard to the people, there is no difficulty in maintaining healthy conditions.

Still you object to bringing people to centres?—Yes.

I think a good many were brought in by the Police?—Yes.

Judging from what you saw, you thought distress was very great in the district?—Undoubtedly.

Did you visit any relief works during the rains?—Yes.

I should like to know your opinion as to the general health of the workers on relief works during the rains. Can they be kept in good health?—Undoubtedly; but they were living under unfavourable conditions, and, unless better arrangements are made, their health must deteriorate.

Were the hutting arrangements sufficient?—In some cases they were. I think the tendency was to limit the accommodation, and sometimes it was apt to be overcrowded. Provision was not made for an influx.

Were the huts fairly water-tight?—I think so.

Were there outbreaks of epidemic disease in the rainy season?—The only outbreak of disease was before the rains where the water-supply was very much polluted.

You said the poor-house ration was increased. Was the poor-house ration in the North-Western Provinces similarly increased?—I have no information. The poor-house population was in very good condition in the North-Western Provinces.

Was the increased ration due to the state of the people when they came in?—Undoubtedly.

If you had to deal with the population in a normal condition, would the Code ration be sufficient?—It is deficient in vegetable, acids, oil, salt and fat.

(*President.*)—I see that the death-rate in Balaghat Jail was very much higher than in any other jail, is there any special reason for that?—Yes; a large number of the inmates should not have been sent to jail. They were so destitute and in such a desperate condition that they should have been sent to the poor-house.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—Was the poor-house at Seoni maintained by Government or by private charity?—By private charity for a considerable time, and afterwards by Government.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—When you saw the condition of things in Saugor, did you make any report to the Local Government that the district seemed in a very bad condition?—The usual official report was submitted.

At once, I presume—I think it was.

It reached the Administration within a month, I suppose?—I cannot say.

In that report did you specially dwell on the state of things?—I reported on the poor-house only.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—With reference to Saugor during the rains of 1896-97, had you any reason to believe that large numbers of people were coming in from Gwalior, Bhopal and other States?—No.

As to the condition of things in the hot weather of 1897, had you any reason to believe, either from reports or from personal observation, that relief was being insufficiently granted?—No.

Are we to take it that the sudden increase in the distress at the commencement of the monsoon came to the province as a surprise?—It was the usual condition of the season. The mortality is affected by seasonal conditions in all provinces. The mortality reaches its maximum in August and September.

Did you at that time think that there would probably be a large increase in the mortality during the rains which could be met by arrangements made in the hot weather. Had you any idea of changes in the arrangements in the hot weather?—Simply general measures, supporting people throughout and maintaining their physical condition.

So far as came to your knowledge, were the relief measures which were enforced during the hot weather sufficient for that purpose?—I do not think I can form an opinion on that point.

Were there any complaints during the hot weather that relief was being given insufficiently?—None.

The mortality during the rains in the provinces we know was not evenly spread. Would you say that the Wardha District is a very distressed district?—I think we might, throughout the year, say it was a scarcity district. It was not considered a famine district, but there was a great deal of distress. In some parts the distress was very acute.

Were there any signs reported from Wardha which were different from other districts?—There were a good number of wanderers from other districts.

Looking to the fact that in August and September the death-rate in Wardha was, respectively, $\frac{1}{6}$th and $\frac{1}{8}$rd of that of the whole Province, would you be disposed to modify your opinion that the high death-rate in the rains was due to insufficient nourishment?—I don't think I have quite said so. It affected the death-rate considerably.

Having regard to the fact that the death-rate was so high in some parts of the province, would you be disposed to draw any conclusion as to the season being an unhealthy one?—It depends upon the distribution of the rainfall. Undoubtedly unseasonable rainfall will cause sickness and mortality.

The high death-rate was greatly due to climatic conditions?—Yes.

As regards the water-supply on relief works, is it or is it not a fact that in many places there was no water really except that afforded by nullahs?—Yes.

You are aware that in some places where it was necessary to open works there were only springs?—Yes.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—When you said there was great distress in Wardha, had you any special tahsil in mind?—Hinganghat, towards Chanda.

MR. C. W. MCIVER, District Superintendent of Police, Jabalpur, called in and examined.

Mr. C. W. McIver.

16th Mar. 1898.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

Cause of the Famine.

As far as I have been able to gather the cause of the famine of 1896-97 was the short or untimely falls of rain during the years 1894, 1895 and 1896; the crops of this district depend on the rainfall, and when we have a short fall, or the rain is untimely, we have a failure of crops; in 1894, there was rain nearly every month; the result was rust; in 1895 the rabi also suffered from rust; in 1896 the kharif suffered first owing to delay in monsoon, then to too much rain with a rush, and finally to the monsoon having stopped suddenly in August; and owing to the last-named cause, people were

unable to prepare fields for the rabi; three bad kharifs and two rabis, followed by this third very bad year for rabi, was more than the people could stand.

The relief measures adopted were sufficient, but the people of this district did not take full advantage of them; in the first place there was a disinclination to go to the poor-houses. The people appeared to prefer wandering about and begging; with some, caste was the reason; with others the rules and confinement was an objection; while others, although starving, wished to regulate their own diet; the village-relief was of course most popular, and here often relief had to be given to persons who had had the chance of going to works, but who, owing to distance of the works, preferred to starve at their homes until they got village-relief. The labouring classes were easy to deal with, and would go to works and camp there; it was the agricultural classes and the artizans, such as blacksmiths, carpenters, sonars, etc., who could not be induced to go from their villages any distance. Relief-centres, where there was no fixed task and no means of seeing the amount of work done by each unit, always drew crowds. Here people who could return home each night, came even when not absolutely necessary, and at such works undoubtedly persons not absolutely in want received aid at first, but this could not be avoided; there was a very great inclination on the part of some to wander from one work to another merely to see where they could get the best return for least work put in; this restless spirit gave some trouble. Of the forms of gratuitous relief given, the most popular was that of "kitchens," for here the children were relieved and thousands of young lives saved; there can be no doubt this is the proper form of relief for children who willingly came 3 and 4 miles for their food. The most unpopular work was the breaking of stones on roadsides, while the most popular works were digging of tanks, bunding of fields and earthwork on roads. As far as this district is concerned, I think, famine work should be confined to roads, tanks, and bunding of fields.

During the famine, work on a railway was going on in this district. As soon as relief-works were opened within range of this railway, the people began to go off to the relief-work; the cause of this was simple: on the railway the work was by contract, only able-bodied persons were taken on and a full task was demanded, while on the relief-work at that time there was no task-work and whole families got relief, and thus earned more than the working members on the railway.

One of the best forms of relief given was the opening out of the Government forests, when the people were permitted to go in and procure edible fruits free, and near the larger towns take in head-loads of grass and wood for sale, this saved very many lives.

A very difficult thing in this famine has been the question of orphans; of course, if missions and churches were permitted to take the children right off, there would be no trouble; but there was a distinct feeling among the people on this point; the danger in handing low caste children over to natives is that they may be brought up practically as slaves; resident orphans don't give much trouble but orphans whose parents had wandered here from other Provinces and Native States were difficult to dispose of.

The question how to prevent wandering is also a difficult one. During the famine large numbers belonging to other districts and Native States wandered in here; special patrolling arrangements were made to pick up all such wanderers. Police-posts had advances to feed these people and help them on to either a poor-house or a relief-work; generally they were found in a condition fit only for the poor-house. All wanderers received the same help and treatment: the mortality of this district was considerably affected by these wanderers, who so often came into this district in a very emaciated state.

Since 1894 a good many of the people from the jungly parts of this district have been drafted off to Assam by cooly agents; it is impossible to get correct figures, for not only were a large number of persons unlicensed who worked outside the Act, but people were in a great many cases deceived and sent off to Assam. From general enquiries I should say at least 30,000 have gone from this district.

(*President.*)—How long have you been District Superintendent of Police, Jabalpur?—I joined on the 4th of May 1895.

What did you think of the condition of the people at that time?—How were they getting on in the spring of 1895?—Well, towards the end of November and December they showed a slight falling off in condition; it was nothing very much.

Were the rains of 1895 heavy?—Yes, in the beginning. I think in that year they stopped suddenly.

In 1895 were there any signs of distress? Were there any thefts of corn or dacoities, etc.?—No serious crime. There was a slight increase of petty crime.

Was that attributed to the people being in want of food, or to what was it attributed in the returns?—It was put down to the partial failure of crops and their not having sufficient work to do.

At that time in 1895 were there any measures of relief, poor-houses, etc.?—Towards the end of 1895 there was a small poor-house worked in the city here.

That was due to an increase of beggars in the town, was it not?—Yes.

And in 1896 what was the state of the district as regards crime?—There was a further increase over 1895.

Of the same kind?—Yes, petty crime, grain thefts.

In 1896 relief measures were undertaken?—Yes, in the spring of 1896 there were certain small relief measures undertaken in the way of roads by District Boards.

Were they ordinary District Board roads?—Yes. They were specially opened to see what they would draw—more in the nature of test-works.

Did they attract many people?—Not as many people as it was expected they would.

When did relief-work begin?—As far as I remember at the end of February 1896. The Katni-Saugor line also had some work I believe in December 1895.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Carried on by contractors?—Yes.

(*President.*)—In respect to orphans you say "the danger in handing low-caste children over to natives is they may be brought up practically as slaves," but I suppose they would soon find out when they grew up that they were not slaves. Perhaps your remarks apply to females?—It applies to males also.

Would not the men find out that they were free to do as they liked?—I am afraid they would not be able to find it out. Even if a small amount is spent on their weddings it is enough to keep them going permanently as servants.

Is it not probable that they are content with their position?—I fancy they are content.

The death returns come from the police?—They are compiled by the police in the district. They do not pass through my office.

Do you think that in a famine year they are likely to be as near the real figures as in ordinary years?—I think pretty nearly.

You say that since 1894 a good many of the people from the jungly parts of this district have been drafted off to Assam by coolie agents. You estimate the probable number at 30,000. Why do you think that this drafting has been going on since 1894? Was it in connection with the distress?—In 1894 they got a great demand for coolies in Assam and paid very highly for them. So many contractors started here. These people had their agents here.

Had they depôts before?—They had, but still towards 1894 there was a large increase in the depôts.

What class of people were sent away?—Gonds, Kols, Bhurrias, etc.

You say that people were in a great many cases deceived and sent off to Assam. What kind of deceit was practiced?—They were enticed to Jabalpur for local works and they were simply railed off before they knew where they were going to.

Were any prosecutions instituted?—Yes; prosecutions against depôt agents for kidnapping and unlawful confinement.

Do you mean that depôt agents were able to deceive the people because the people were hard up for work and ready to go to Jabalpur for the work?—There are certain times of the year when they will willingly go away for this sort of work. If they got them at a time like that there would be no difficulty in bringing them.

To what Provinces do these agents belong?—The majority belong to these parts. There are some Bengali Babus and some Europeans.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Were the District Police required to report deaths from privation or starvation?—Yes; regular death forms were submitted.

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Did you issue any instructions to the police as to how they were to classify privation or starvation?—Instructions were issued according to a circular received from head-quarters.

What was that?—I don't think I could repeat it.

At first there were many starvation deaths reported?—Yes, they were classed as starvation.

Then was it found that that classification was wrong?—It was found so because we could not say for certain when he had had the last meal.

When did a man die from starvation?—I think it said if he had not had sufficient food for three days.

Was that the original order?—No, the second order. At first there were no instructions, and when bodies were found the ordinary inquest was held, and the opinion on the inquest recorded.

In Jabalpur 200 persons were returned as having died from privation or starvation in January 1897. Were these all the result of police inquests?—Yes. Police inquests were held in all cases where the name and residence was known.

Then how was the cause of death of the others ascertained?—We had to depend on the village *kotwal* and *mukaddam*.

That was the first stage. The second stage was an order?—The order was issued in December 1896.

What was that?—The principle was that if a man died without food for three days, it was a starvation death.

In consequence of this did the number of deaths fall off?—Only for a time. They fell steadily as soon as we had village relief.

When did they begin to fall?—I am afraid I cannot answer that.

Had you anything to do with relief measures in the district?—No.

Did you see any of the relief centres?—I saw them in the ordinary course of my duties.

Were they crowded?—In some cases they were crowded. In some cases there were very few on works.

You say they drew crowds?—Village centres I mean. Separate from engineering works.

There was no fixed task and no means of saying the amount of work done?—No. Because it was in the hands of mukaddams and malguzars.

Were these relief centres a satisfactory means of relief?—I think at first a good many people came who had no right to be there. There were some strong men on them.

Do you consider that they are a satisfactory form of relief?—If properly managed.

But as you saw them?—Not at the beginning certainly. But latterly they were.

Did relief centres continue all through?—A certain number did.

You say in your written note that the labouring classes were easy to deal with and would go to works and camp there. Did many people live on engineering works?—There were a good many people living on two or three of the works.

You say the agricultural classes and artizans could not be induced to go from their villages any distance. Did you notice it yourself?—Yes I noticed it and asked the reasons.

What were the reasons?—They did not wish to leave their houses. The artizans had got their village rates fixed and preferred not to go to a distance.

Was it the same with the cultivators?—The cultivators had a certain number of cattle to look after and said they could not look after their cattle if they left. The works were afterwards made handier for them and they went to them.

Do you think that continued all through—that the cultivating classes did not live on the works?—I think so.

When the works were thoroughly organized in April was the work within a reasonable distance of nearly every village?—No, I am afraid not.

Were they scattered pretty well?—They were in most parganas, and all tahsils.

Did you see anything of the working of village relief?—Yes, I saw it, but personally had nothing to do with it.

Do you think that was a satisfactory means of relief?—Very satisfactory.

Do you think the people who were receiving doles were the people who were really deserving of them?—At first certain numbers came who had no right to them, but once the thing had been inspected it was put right.

Were they mostly infirm people and old women and children?—The majority of them were.

These people are in ordinary years supported by private charity; are they not?—Yes, and by other members of their families.

Now that village relief has been stopped are these people being supported?—Yes, they are all right now.

You say in your written note the most unpopular work was the breaking of stones on roadsides?—Yes, that was the opinion I gathered from what I saw on the roads. The chief reason they said was that it was work for prisoners.

Is it a sentimental reason do you think?—I think it is admittedly hard work for any man to break stones at any time.

As to orphans, are Hindus more ready to take orphans than Mahomedans?—That is true.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—As regards the last paragraph of your written evidence, did you not have a suit instituted against you by a coolie contractor?—Yes.

What was the object of that suit. To terrorize the police?—Yes, I suppose so.

Did that suit fail?—Yes.

You disposed of a portion of the Charitable Relief Fund?—Yes.

What special form did the relief take?—I gave out clothes, blankets, etc.

Did you find the people very much in need of clothes?—Yes.

You personally distributed several thousands?—I should say nearly R4,000 worth.

Was that given to deserving objects?—Yes, to the best of my ability.

Could you have given more if you had had a larger supply?—Yes, I think I could have given much more, but there were others also distributing.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—You said you had no personal connection with the measures taken for famine relief. Did you not, as a matter of fact, have some kitchens under you?—Yes, I had children's kitchens.

How many children were there in the kitchens?—I suppose there must have been between 3,000 and 4,000 at its highest.

You said although relief-works were started relief centres were kept up all through; were these not really hospitals?—Eventually.

Were these centres worked on the Public Works system?—Yes.

From your knowledge of the people, do you think the people who came to relief-works could be drafted a long distance from their homes, for instance, could you draft them 30 miles off?—I think experience showed that in one or two cases they ran back when drafted very far.

Had you any experience of people bolting?—Yes, at the Bilhari Chaka work.

(*President.*)—In what month?—March 1897.

A question has been raised whether legislation *is* possible or necessary to enable the police to compel starving people to go to poor-houses and to justify their keeping people in poor-houses against their will. Have you any opinion in the matter?—No, I have not. As a matter of fact the police did practically arrest the people. They took them to poor-houses or works if they were fit for work, and if they were in a really bad state, they were then carried to poor-houses. That was done in the case of wanderers only. In the case of local villagers they were taken to their homes.

Taking all the *pros* and *cons* into consideration are you or not disposed to consider that legislation was necessary?—No; we have had no difficulty.

KHAN BAHADUR AULAD HUSEIN, C.I.E., Settlement Officer, Seoni, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

AS TO THE EXTENT AND SEVERITY OF THE DISTRESS.

*1. The northern, north-eastern and western portions of the Lakhnadon Tahsil and the whole of the eastern and southern tracts of the Seoni Tahsil were affected. The area under distress amounted to 1,766 square miles, with a population of about 2 lakhs of souls.

2. Yes. It was due to the failure of timely rains and of kharif harvests, and to some extent to abnormally high prices also.

4. Average condition. The last preceding season of rabi and kharif crops was also unfavourable.

5. Yes. The population of the affected area enjoys a fair measure of material well-being. The aboriginal tribes, *viz.*, Gonds, Mahras and Pardhans, who form a fairly large proportion of the population, are ordinarily in poor condition.

6. Yes.

AS TO THE ARRANGEMENTS EXISTING FOR ASCERTAINING THE IMMINENCE OF SCARCITY.

34. In my opinion the existing arrangements in these Provinces for ascertaining and reporting failure of rainfall, crops, cattle diseases and other agricultural calamities through patwaris and revenue inspectors, are sufficient.

35. We have patwari organization.

36. (I)—Generally speaking the crop returns can be relied upon. Every possible effort is made to secure accurate areas. The fields in the hilly tracts which yield inferior millets, are, however, ill-defined, and in their croppings inaccuracies might occur.

(II)—Although our crop returns do not clearly show the exact extent to which sowings have failed, yet this information can be gathered from the anna estimates made by the Land Record Staff, who base them on the cultivators' own statement. The cultivators in determining the outturns fully take into account the quantity of the ungerminated seed.

(III)—I presume that our estimates of outturns of crops are generally fairly accurate.

37. No. The occurrence of famine is mainly due to failure of kharif crops. In these Provinces field inspection is done after the sowing of the rabi crops. Thus, it is difficult to judge from the Provincial crop returns the true extent of distress in time.

AS TO RELIEF-WORKS.

I.—Extent to which works of public utility may be available as relief works.

57. In those districts where rice cultivation is carried on, such as Seoni, Raipur, Chanda and Bhandara, and also in some portions of the Jubbulpore District, the construction of tanks is, in my opinion, the most useful work; for the tanks constructed would, in their localities, irrigate permanently rice-fields whose fertility and prosperity rest entirely upon the quantity of the water in such tanks in cases of total absence of rain-water. Moreover, this work would afford considerable labour to the villagers and prevent them from leaving their villages and wandering abroad in pains and miseries in distant countries to eke out their livelihood.

59. The average number of workers would, in my opinion, be sixty. When the work of constructing small tanks is in progress in any compact group of four or five villages, the strict supervision that I can suggest now, can be made by a man appointed for this purpose on a suitable pay. The wages for excavating the mud of the tanks should be paid on the scale of measurement prevailing in the vicinity of such villages. By this process we would be able to ascertain whether the expenditure incurred was not mis-spent. Or, in places where the malguzars are well-to-do, orders should be given to them to the effect that they should carry on the work of constructing tanks on the same principle of daily payments by actual measurements of the work done. The expenses which the malguzars will have to incur daily on this account must be examined by a Government officer deputed for this purpose, and this procedure would undoubtedly cause a decrease in the number of Government officials appointed for this purpose.

As a safeguard for preventing the whole population of the village from applying for work, I would suggest that distinct orders should be issued to the officer deputed for this purpose to the effect that in a village where such a work is to be started it will be incumbent upon him to get the applicants certified by the local malguzar as really deserving of relief, and then to enter their names in a register to be constantly kept with him. At the same time he would impress upon the malguzar that the number of selected persons would in no case exceed that already fixed, unless there are strong reasons for exceeding it. But, in cases of emergency, the number can be increased, but by mutual consultation of the malguzar and the officer deputed. tickets must be given to workers to distinguish them from non-workers.

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60. Yes. There is much scope for excavating new village tanks in the rice-growing tracts of this district.

II.—As to large and small works and the distance test.

71. (*a*)—Not more than 2 miles, so that the distressed people may not be put to any unnecessary trouble.

(*b*)—Not more than 10 miles, so that the people may find an opportunity once in a week to go to their villages to see their household property.

72. Yes. Relief should be withheld from all such refusers, except for exceptional cases, because village relief-works near their homesteads are only intended for the really disabled persons.

73. No. I am not disposed to recommend conveying relief labourers to long distances, unless they are not to be brought back to their native places; otherwise, after the famine is over, there would be a great deficiency of field labourers in the affected country by which the agricultural operations would be greatly hampered.

AS TO LOANS TO CULTIVATORS AND LANDHOLDERS.

199. The advances given to tenants and landowners under different heads are detailed below:—

Land improvement.	Cattle and seed-grain and subsistence.	Tanks and embankments.	Total.
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1,550	41,241	23,609	66,400

200. The money thus advanced was, as far as I know, spent mostly on the same objects for which it was lent.

201. The money advanced for the purchase of cattle and seed was indeed of much benefit to the cultivating classes. More money thus to be advanced would have been spent with more advantageous effects, specially for the seed of the rice crop, which had fallen short owing to the serious damage caused thereto for want of rain in the previous year.

204—206. In my opinion to give general advances to tenants for their food would, undoubtedly, be a heavy burden on the State and would lead to an increase of indebtedness among the cultivators. Considering these facts, I am of opinion that the tenants who have a sufficient stock of husbandry, including plough-cattle, may be given advances for food which would suffice them for a month or so, which is the extreme limit of time allowed for sowing crops. As for the remaining period, they can eke out their livelihood by working on labour.

AS TO SUSPENSIONS AND REMISSIONS OF LAND REVENUE.

208. Yes. Measures have been taken to give relief to tenants also. Yes; in the proposed amendment of the Tenancy Act provisions have been made for this.

209. Much advantage has accrued to the cultivating and land-owning classes from suspension of land revenue, and the people were thus prevented from falling headlong into debt on account of revenue demands.

210 and 211. As regards the recovery of the suspended revenue, we have to consider several phases of the case. In villages where, during the current year, the cultivation of both the kharif and rabi crops has been much contracted, the malguzars would be unable to realise rents to the full extent from their tenants, and in such a case the landlords would be involved in debt if they were pressed to pay up their demands. Of course in places where the village has not

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

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much deteriorated, and has cultivation, the suspensions should be realised by three annual instalments. And the rents suspended should also be collected in similar instalments.

212. The malguzars charge interest on overdue arrears of rents, but, in my opinion, they should not do it, for the Government does not charge any interest on suspended revenue, and there seems no cogent reason why the malguzars taking advantage of the concession at the hands of Government should not extend the same concession to their tenants.

213. I am not aware whether Government has power to direct suspensions of rents in estates held free of revenue; but, in my opinion, it should necessarily have such powers, inasmuch as when suspensions of revenue are made in revenue-paying estates, the corresponding rents of tenants are also suspended, and when the rights of tenants of revenue-free estates are in all respects identical with those in the malguzari villages, I do not see any reason why the former should not be benefited by the concessions of rent suspensions as given to the tenants of other villages.

214. The proper treatment is immediate remission.

215. As far as my knowledge goes, the indebtedness of purely agricultural malguzars and tenants has more than doubled. In the generality of cases in this district loans have been taken on such high rates of interest as must involve ultimate ruin to the borrower.

As to the use made of Forests.

216. Some steps were actually taken for throwing open the forests to the poor for edible products, dry fruit and grass; and these measures were thus very beneficial in saving human life from otherwise inevitable starvation.

217. It would have been still more beneficial if State forests had been thrown open to purely agricultural classes for free grazing. The remissions of the grazing dues would have been a thorough boon instead of the suspensions given in this district.

218. No such operations were undertaken in this district.

219. Mahua, achar, tendu, aonla, roots, plums (ber) and various kinds of edible leaves and fruits.

As to orphans.

220. At the end of famine enquiry should be made in villages of their residence if any of their relations or caste-fellows are willing to take them in. If none of such persons comes forward, then they should be entrusted to local bodies of their co-religionists; and if no such community agrees to accept them, they may be offered to any person or persons undertaking to support them.

221. Government should continue to support them unless adequate means are found for their support, or until they come of age to earn their own livelihood.

As to private charitable relief as auxiliary to State relief.

222. The objects referred to in this question seem to be sufficiently exhaustive. I have no suggestion to make.

223. They, in my opinion, supplement the Government relief.

224. In my opinion the second object should stand thus; "Maintaining orphans after the famine is over until they are suitably provided for, or become self-supporting."

225. Yes.

226. In my opinion the Government should provide them with food, and the Charitable Fund with clothing.

227. Yes; undoubtedly.

228. Not to any marked extent. The benefit to the distressed far outweighs the little loss, if any, to the well-to-do traders. One such shop was opened in the Seoni town and no complaint about its having injured private trade ever reached my ears.

229. The shop was mainly intended for the relief of the really needy, and thus it could not affect the prevailing market rates.

230. To render the help more effective to their manifest advantage, I think it would be better that relief should be given just before the beginning of the agricultural season, even though distress be the acutest at the time.

231. Agriculturists who have neither means nor credit.

232. No.

233. Yes. I have seen instances in which assistance was a really beneficial supplement to the takavi advances, which did not fully satisfy the requirements detailed in this question.

234. Yes. It really relieved persons who could otherwise get little or no assistance from Government.

235 and 236. The nature and extent of relief in this district may be described as follows:—

Under Objects I and II relief was given (*a*) to inmates of poor-house and orphanage, persons working in a relief-camp, children's kitchen and patients in hospitals in the shape of clothing and extra diet; (*b*) relief to persons in the town and in the interior of the district in the shape of clothes and blankets; (*c*) blankets to travellers. The number of persons relieved under these two heads is 35,561 at a cost of Rs. 18,754-1-8.

Relief under Object III was given as under—(*a*) cash monthly allowances to the respectable poor; (*b*) a cheap-grain shop was also opened. The number of persons entered under this head is 2,675 at a cost of Rs. 2,293-4-6.

Relief under IV was given for seed, subsistence and purchase of bullocks. The number of persons relieved under this head is 19,253 at a cost of Rs. 1,10,943-2-7.

237. Warm blankets in the cold season evoked the greatest gratitude of the recipients.

238. The cheap-grain shop afforded the greatest amount of good at the smallest cost to the Fund.

239. Yes.

240. Yes; certainly.

241. The approximate area so sown in this district is detailed below:—

Acres 45,454 under kharif crop.

„ 11,457 under rabi crop.

As to the food stocks and prices.

283*a*. There was no appreciable difference. In my opinion the trade was not so brisk as could have been expected from high prices ruling at the time, because (1) the traders knew that the prices throughout the Provinces were nearly the same, and this deterred them from risking their capital; (2) the grain stock in this district was not in excess of the actual requirements of the district, and where they had a little surplus they did not consider it safe to dispose of it, fearing future failures from the panic caused among the agricultural classes by successive failure of preceding crops; (3) the trading bania class was slow in disposing of their stock in hopes of getting higher prices in future, having in view the steady rise in prices; (4) to a certain extent grain-dealers were apprehensive of their grain being *looted* in transit by starving people.

285. In towns and big villages where the food stocks were generally adequate, grain could ordinarily be purchased at the market rates, but in rural tracts people had to purchase generally at higher prices.

288. Fortunes were made by a few grain traders during high prices. They were generally banias, and also some well-to-do agriculturists who had surplus stock.

290. Some of the well-to-do malguzars and tenants had surplus private stocks of food-grain which they generally sold during famine.

291. Yes.

293. The habit of storing food-grain in pits, etc., has appreciably diminished owing to the increased facilities for trade by opening out of the country.

294. Yes; undoubtedly.

295. The proprietors, etc., got relief which preserved them from starvation.

296. Agricultural and labouring classes.

297. The inability of the distressed people to buy at high prices was principally due to want of labour and capital. Yes; because there were no persons who were willing to lay out their capital on any sort of work.

298. No; because there was no demand for labour.

302. The jewelry, brass pots and cattle were sold on a much more extensive scale as the famine was more acute, and the fall in silver did not in the least deter the distressed people from selling their silver articles.

303. The prices could not have been lowered without damaging ordinary trade.

304. The old big grain traders have imported Burma rice in the district during the famine. It was never imported before.

(*The witness gave his evidence in the vernacular.*)

(*President*).—When did you join the district?—In 1894.

What was the condition of the district at that time?—The district was then in a fairly good condition.

When was the pressure of the distress felt in Seoni?—In 1896 on the failure of the kharif harvest.

Did you join the district in the beginning or at the end of 1894?—I joined the district at the end of August 1894.

In reply to question 5 you have stated that Gonds, Mahras, and Pardhans are in a poor condition. Why are they so?—Because they generally cultivate land with minor crops, sell firewood and maintain themselves on labour. These sources of income fail when the season is bad.

Are they cultivators or landowners?—Some of them are cultivators and some of them labourers. Very few are landowners.

Are there tanks in Seoni, or is there scope for excavating new village tanks?—Yes. There is still considerable room for excavating new village tanks in the rice-growing tracts of the district.

A number of tanks were constructed from relief. Do you know their exact number?—No, I do not know.

What sorts of relief works were commenced in the Seoni District?—The works were not in my charge; from what I know I may say they are road works.

On what particular object did the malguzars spend the money advanced to them?—In the construction and repair of tanks.

Did they employ their own villagers?—Yes.

Were the employés strong or weak persons?—Both the strong and weak were employed, but to the latter the wages for taking out the mud from tanks were, in consideration of their physical weakness, given on the scale of measurement, which was comparatively more favourable to the workers than the ordinary scale.

Do you approve of the principle of giving advances as a measure of relief?—Yes, I approve of it.

I am told that some of the persons refused to take advances?—Yes. There were some persons who refused to take advances.

Did the distress make its appearance in the beginning of November?—Yes, on account of the failure of the kharif harvest.

When were the relief works started?—As far as I remember they were commenced during the months of December and January.

Do you know whether the people came in large numbers to relief works?—Yes, they came in large numbers.

Were the works commenced according to the requirements of the district?—Yes, they were commenced according to the requirements of the district.

What was the ratio of deaths in your district?—I do not know.

Did cattle die in large numbers during the famine?—No; nor was there any cattle disease in the district.

Were the grazing dues remitted or suspended?—As far as I know they were not remitted. The grazing dues payable by persons who absconded from their villages were of course not taken into account, and they were ultimately cancelled.

In what way were grazing dues realized? Do people hold licenses?—The way in which they are usually realized as far as I know is that the cattle are counted and lists showing their numbers are prepared, on the basis of which the dues are realized.

How did you come to know that grazing dues were not remitted?—I learnt it from the Extra Assistant Conservator of the Seoni District, who told me that the things which were allowed to the public free of charge were grass, mahua, firewood and other edible fruits only.

Were the prospects of the rabi crops unfavourable in tracts where there was a total failure of the rice crop?—In the rice-growing tracts rabi crops are but little raised, and those too were in a bad condition.

Do you know that Gonds come to work on labour?—Yes, they come, but other persons also come to work on labour.

Do these Gonds work on roads?—Yes.

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In what way was the relief given to persons who reside in the hills?—Relief was given to them by Government in the way of employing them in the construction of tanks and roads.

To what extent was there a total failure of the kharif crops during 1896?—To a very great extent rice, kodon and kutki had failed at that time.

Are road works more advantageous than the construction of tanks?—In my opinion the construction of tanks and embankments are more advantageous.

As regards your reply to question 71(*a*), what kind of persons in your opinion deserve concessions?—In my opinion the weak and the tenants whose agricultural operations are likely to be greatly hampered.

Had people to reside on relief centres who came there from distances greater than 2 miles?—Yes, the people who came there from distances greater than 2 miles had to reside there, but those whose villages were not at such long distances went back to their villages in the evening.

Were the wages given sufficient?—Yes, sufficient.

In what state were the labourers and children?—Of the labourers some were weak and some strong. As regards children I knew nothing.

Are there orphans in your district?—Yes, there are, but their exact number is not known to me.

Is distress at an end now?—Yes, owing to the good outturn of kharif millets, such as kodon, kutki and sawan, etc.

How did you come to know that the debt has more than doubled?—From what the people told me. I move a good deal among them.

If there are two or three succeeding years of good harvests will the people recover their former state of comfort and will they be free from their debt?—Yes.

To what extent was rice cultivated in your district?—Out of the total area of 651,512·85 acres under crop 104,753 acres under rice, 185,999·16 acres were under wheat—gram and wheat, 36,317·03 acres under gram, 124,587·16 acres under kodon, 28,153·57 acres under juari.

At what prices were the cattle sold?—At half the actual price.

You were President of the District Committee of the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund?—Yes. I was appointed President in September 1897.

What was the estimate of the requirements of the agriculturists of your district as sent up to the Provincial Committee by the District Committee before you became President?—R25,000.

Was this estimate sufficient?—Not at all. While I was President I had applied for 3 lakhs and some thousand rupees, and the money so demanded by me would have been just sufficient to help the utterly broken down tenants for the purchase of about one-third of the quantity of the rabi seed they were actually in need of. The time to help them for the kharif had then gone by.

In your opinion how many rupees would have been sufficient to help the tenants with the kharif seed?—One lakh.

Has the relief given from the Charitable Fund been beneficial?—Yes, most decidedly.

About this relief, what did the people think of it?—The people all know that the money was sent to them from subscriptions raised for them in England, and they are deeply grateful for the timely help.

Were clothes distributed?—Yes, clothes and blankets were distributed.

What would have happened had they not been distributed?—The blankets evoked undoubtedly the greatest gratitude of the people, who would certainly have died from cold had these not been distributed to them.

How did you come to know that jewels were sold largely?—I heard it from the people who deal in these things and from the tenants who sold them.

Had you been Settlement Officer in the Mandla district?—Yes, I was the Settlement Officer of that district up to the end of 1890.

Are you aware that the Gonds and Baigas of that district did not come to the works opened for their relief?—These Gonds and Baigas are people who would never like to work so long as they have anything for their food in their forests, even such things as *bairs* or anything like that, and though

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the quantity may not be enough to support them for more than a day.

In reply to question 215 you state that the rates of interest were high; what were the rates?—At the rate of 2 per cent. per month.

Did the malguzars give any relief to their tenants?—No.

Did you observe gold and silver ornaments on the person of the women of the agriculturists generally during the time that this distress lasted?—They do not generally have gold ornaments as far as I could ascertain. As for silver ornaments, the poorer cultivators had parted with them and had none at the time.

Rev. Dr. Johnson.

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The Rev. Dr. Johnson, Methodist Episcopal Church Mission, Jabalpur, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

Before offering any remarks on a few of the many questions submitted by the Famine Relief Commission, I desire to express my very high admiration of the Government, which took in hand and so successfully carried forward, at such heavy expenditure in money and almost unparalleled efforts on the part of its officers, one of the greatest and most humane undertakings recorded in the world's history. Truly to meet such an emergency shows very able statesmanship and great devotion to God and humanity.

*71 and 72. The distance at which distressed villagers may be required to attend relief-works, I would say when they return every night to their villages, up to four miles, the coming and going to be allowed for in the working hours, counting three miles to the hour; and when accommodation is provided at the relief-works six or seven miles, so that the different relief-works might be twelve or fourteen miles apart. Of course, density of population and many other circumstances might modify the distances very much. When able-bodied labourers refuse to go the distance indicated, I would not think it necessary to offer other relief. If, however, it were possible, it would be much better for the people to return to their homes for the night. To properly provide for them at the relief-works, great expense would be required for hutting, blankets, etc., otherwise suffering and sickness and death must be greatly increased.

73. Under the circumstances indicated, I would recommend conveying labourers to distant works of importance when good accommodation could be provided for them, and capable persons from their own neighbourhood could be sent in charge of them.

Task-Work.

85 and 86. I do not think this kind of work suitable for famine-relief, not in the case of any, especially with the superintendence which has to be depended upon in this country. The people who will do the work most satisfactorily—and who will probably get a large part of it—will hardly be subjects for famine-relief at all, but know how to secure the favour of their fellows in immediate charge; while those not so strong, but those for whom the work and relief is intended, are turned away, and wander about until unable to work at all and have to go to the poor-house and die of starvation. The object being to give relief and save life rather than to secure the greatest possible amount of labour which cannot be done by task-work.

124—126. I think payments should be daily. On established works, however, they might be made once in two days. I would say have the moharrirs make the payments under supervision, and not increase the establishments with cashiers, who would also require supervision.

131. It would be very difficult to decide the ratio of famine-labour to work done at ordinary rates; nor do I think it important to establish any such ratio; while the people should be required to do a reasonable amount of work, the object is to give relief and save life, not the market-value of the work done.

Persons admitted to the work before they become emaciated and weak, may be able to do full work, and should be required to do so; but by far the greater number will in fact be able to do but comparatively little work.

As to Sunday, a day of rest, I would pay the same as is paid on working days. I would pay two days' wages every Saturday evening, that is, for Saturday and Sunday. This was our practice during the late famine. I would give Sunday as a rest-day for several reasons: (1) because it is right: it is God's plan for man; (2) because man needs one day in seven for rest; (3) because people can do more work in a month by resting every seventh day, and do it better, than though they worked every day in the month, and they will enjoy better health and keep in better condition generally. This is not simple theory, but something which has been tested to my entire satisfaction. In the late famine many Hindus and Mahomedans, both labourers and overseers, were, to my certain knowledge, very anxious to have Sunday as a day of rest. The observation of Sunday as a day of rest not only meets the Divine approval, but the approval of men of all religions.

155. Decidedly not.

156. Certainly I would.

193. I think a limited number of relief-kitchens, carefully located, very useful for children and people who are not caste bound. They, however, cannot take the place of home-relief, nor is it desirable to have them in connection with relief-works. As to undertaking to maintain a sufficient number of kitchens to serve all dependant persons, it would neither be possible nor desirable.

Orphans.

220. I think the former practice of Government of making famine orphans over to recognized orphanages, where the managers are willing and able to receive and properly care for them, is the best possible way of providing for them.

221. I believe the practice of giving aid to orphanages, for famine or other orphans made over to them proper and just, and that it is very desirable that the practice be continued. I knew of no case where that aid has been given to such orphanages during the recent famine. Aid from the Mansion House Fund has been given to a number of orphanages receiving famine orphans, and I understand that the balance of the Mansion House Fund is to be used in aid of such orphans, which must meet the approval of all right-thinking persons. I would not say that Government should give additional aid to the orphans aided from the Mansion House Fund during the time such aid is being received, but after that is exhausted I certainly think it very appropriate and proper that State aid should be granted to the orphans then remaining.

224. I think it very desirable that private aid of all kinds should be encouraged. Parties sufficiently interested to give money and time would only be too glad to co-operate with Government in such a way as to be helpful in the great work of affording relief, and that without friction or loss. A little consultation, possibly proposed by the Government representative, would be all that is necessary to secure harmony throughout. I would suggest that Government might secure very valuable help from the Missions in the country, generally for superintending and managing all kinds of relief-measures. It may be thought there would be opposition to this through fear of proselytising influences, but where Missionaries have carried on relief-measures of all kinds, there has been no such fear among the people, who are always most eager to avail themselves of the aid of every kind given,—relief-works, kitchens, and in the homes, far beyond the ability of the Missionaries to meet, though large sums of money are expended.

343. I am of opinion that in the case of a widespread famine, it would be very desirable indeed for Government to import grain from other countries for use at relief-centres and for the very poor. If I may be allowed I would suggest that the Government ask the Government of the United States to arrange with Railway Companies there to carry grain for famine-relief purposes to the seaports at reduced rates, say half ordinary rates; and also to enter into arrangements with a number of Steamship Companies to carry such grain to this country at like reduced rates. I believe it practical and very desirable to enter into these arrangements at *once*, and be ready for emergencies when they come. This

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

is a very opportune time to enter into these negotiations, while the memory of the calamity is fresh in the minds of people generally, and while there is such a generous disposition to help relieving suffering of starving multitudes. If in my power to help bring about such arrangements it would give me great pleasure to do so.

(*President*).—May I ask where the headquarters of your Mission are situated?—In Jabalpur for these Provinces and Berar.

Is your knowledge of the famine confined to the Jabalpur district or did you go outside?—I travelled into the Berars and other Provinces.

Did you undertake any special work during the famine?—Yes.

What kind of work?—Almost all kinds.

Did you visit relief-works at all?—We carried on relief-works and visited relief-works.

On behalf of the Mission or Government?—It was not on behalf of Government. We opened relief-works ourselves.

Were these relief-works in the town?—Yes, in the town and near by at Hassa Bagh.

It has been held that if you open too many relief-works you will get many people who are not really in need of relief; that is, people will go from their villages near by. In regard to the Central Provinces to what extent do you think that is true?—I think it might be the case in some parts, but in the condition of these parts of the Provinces it is not a very likely thing. In some parts there was not so much famine as in others.

Well, for that reason some people have suggested that in case of another famine relief-works should begin with big works under officers of the Public Works Department in a few places, and that people in distress should be invited to go to these works, and that small works should not be opened. Do you think in these Provinces people can be safely trusted to go to a distance?—Many would go; many would not go.

Would many people not go although in great need of food? Would there be risk of people half-starving themselves?—Starving to death I think.

Then you don't think it would be safe to have only big works?—Not in case of a severe famine. In other cases it might.

The relief wage just now is the grain equivalent paid in cash, that is worked out in grain and then paid in cash. Do you think it would be a good thing to pay men in grain and not in cash?—If it could be managed probably it would be. I think it would be very difficult. Probably it would be more difficult in doing justice to the people.

How do you mean in doing justice to the people. Would there be any chance of peculation?—In such a gigantic undertaking it would be very difficult. It might be desirable if within the range of management.

I see that you decide in favour of Sunday as a day of rest and paying a wage. The only question in respect of that is whether if the local market day is in the week and people prefer to have the holiday in the week, whether it is not reasonable to let them have their own way in the matter?—I think that might enter into the question very fairly, if there is but one market day in the week.

Otherwise I think we are all agreed that they should have a day of rest?—Yes, decidedly not only so, but the people will improve more rapidly and do more work. We had from 300 to 400 here for months and they improved more rapidly than where Sunday was not observed.

Do you think the objections of caste people to kitchens can be got over in any way by arrangement?—As regards the handling of food, I think that can be done without difficulty.

There has been a good deal of talk and some difference of opinion as to whether parents who receive doles on their own account and on account of their children were stinting their children without stinting themselves. Of course if a person is in a state of acute starvation, he might be expected to do that, but putting that aside if the people were simply underfed would they in your opinion have stinted their children as well as themselves or are they disposed to stint their children and not themselves?—I think I have known of instances on both sides.

I suppose a certain number are disposed to stint both themselves and their children in order to save a little money?—Well, they have to do that in order to make it go round.

Do you think the wage very small?—If there are many children and dependants. If a family are all able to work they might save something if they work economically, but where one is working for the support of two or three it is very difficult.

Were you in Jabalpur in 1894?—Yes.

The spring harvest failed to a large extent in Jabalpur, Saugor and Damoh; did it not?—I did not make very special observations of the crops that year. I heard it was the case.

Did you observe any distress that year?—Yes, but it was not severe. I heard a good deal of complaint of scarcity. I think that was the case in certain parts of the district only.

Did you see any sign of distress in the appearance of the people?—I don't think that I am able to say the date. I noticed it in 1895. I don't think that I noticed special indications of the fact of the scarcity in their appearance in 1894.

In 1895 was there anything in the aspect of a number of the rural population or was it only visible by the in-coming of beggars?—Both.

Was anything done in 1895?—I really do not remember when the relief measures commenced. According to my recollection we commenced to assist in the poor-houses early in 1896, to pay a monthly sum into the poor-house fund, and we were asked to join a Committee. My special attention was called to this in 1896. I don't remember the month. Instead of trying to do anything on our own account, we paid a stated sum to the Committee for the relief of the poor-houses.

Do you think that was in the first-half of 1896?—Yes.

I suppose the idea was then that in all probability there would be a good *kharif* harvest and that after that everything would be over?—That was the hope.

I suppose as it turns out it was unfortunate that relief was not begun earlier in 1896?—It would seem so.

With reference to your answer to question No. 343, one difficulty about Government importing grain is that directly the news of the famine, more particularly if Government is going into the market, gets to America, up go prices and the margin between prices in America and prices in India disappears. Don't you think that that's an objection to the idea of Government buying grain in America?—Yes.

The prices in America would go up so much that it would no longer be worth while to go there for the grain?—It might have that effect. My suggestion, however, is that the Government should ask the Government of the United States to arrange with railway companies there to carry grain for famine relief purposes to the seaport at reduced rates, say half the ordinary rates. And my second suggestion is to enter into arrangements with a number of steamship companies to carry such grain to this country at like reduced rates. I don't think the amount asked for importation would have much effect upon the American market.

(*Mr. Holderness*).—To do as you propose would be to ask the American Government for a charitable concession; would it not?—My thought was to ask Government to use its influence with the railway companies with which coming from Government it would be very likely to comply.

Still it would be a charitable concession on the part of companies?—Yes.

Could the Indian Government do that?—That is another view of the question which has not occurred to me. I think it might be got over in this way. In case of a severe famine if it could originate with our own people.

When did you open your works?—I am not sure about the month.

Was it before the end of 1896?—I don't think we did before the end of 1896.

What made you open them? Were they for your own people or because Government works were not sufficient?—We received a large sum from America, and it was directed that this should be used for the poor, and as there were many others in need, we thought that those able to work should work, and so we started something like Government relief-works.

When did distress become severe and widespread?—I have not got an accurate account as to dates. It was perhaps during the whole of 1896 and in 1897 till the harvest came.

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You say in answer to question No. 85 that you don't think piece-work suitable for famine relief. Did you see any instances of piece-work?—It is more pointing to a general principle. I think piece-work on relief-work has a tendency to call people away from their fields. I have understood that the object of Government was to keep people in their fields. With this system those who are needy are crowded out.

Would you prefer task-work where everybody is sure of a wage?—No.

From your experience on relief-works did you find it possible to get a fair amount of work from labourers?—Those able to work.

You did not fine them heavily and continuously?—We were not severe on them.

Do you think you got as much work as could be reasonably expected?—Yes. The people employed were people not fit to do heavy work. They were generally in an emaciated condition.

Did you see people on Government relief-work?—Yes.

In what condition were they? Were they in that condition or more able-bodied?—I think more able-bodied. I think the greater proportion of those who came to us were worse physically than those on Government relief-works.

You say that by far the greater number of people on relief-work will be able to do but comparatively little work. Does that refer to the ordinary worker who comes for employment to relief-work?—A very great many of those who came when the famine became bad were in that condition. That is my observation.

You say in answer to question No. 193 with reference to relief kitchens "they, however, cannot take the place of home relief, nor is it desirable to have them in connection with relief-works." Would you extend that to children's kitchens also?—I would let the guardians look after them and give them something additional for the support of the children.

You think that if money were given to parents they would spend it properly?—I think that is a difficult question. I think I would leave it that way.

With regard to your answer to question No. 221. Have you received a number of orphans in your Mission?—Yes.

Have you received anything for their future support from the Fund?—We received a sum from the Mansion House Fund before, but are not receiving anything now.

Have you applied for a grant for their future maintenance?—Yes.

You have not been refused?—No.

(*Dr. Richardson*).—You are a Doctor of Medicine?—Yes.

Did you have charge of any hospital here?—No.

Did any cases of death from starvation come to your notice?—Yes: a number of cases that I would attribute to starvation. I was not however present at the *post-mortem*.

On what evidence do you go?—On the utterly emaciated condition of the people. One died in my compound and another on the roadside close by. I was morally certain the death was from starvation.

You think the numbers were considerable; do you?—Yes.

What was the nature of the chief disease the people were suffering from?—Diarrhœa. Cancrum oris was exceptionally bad amongst the children, and a number of the orphans we took in died from it, and so they did wherever children were congregated.

Have you any theory as to the cause of cancrum oris?—No, it is not sufficiently matured.

What was the cause of the diarrhœa?—I think it was from the general diseased condition of the liver and spleen. I have understood from dissection that there was ulceration of the bowels, but I was not present at the *post-mortem*.

Did fever prevail in the years 1896 and 1897?—There was a good deal more than the average.

Was there any peculiar malignancy about the fever?—Yes; sometimes it ran quickly and fatally.

From your observations do you think that it was contagious or was it the ordinary malarial fever of the season?—I don't think it was contagious, but sometimes it was very fatal.

Did it attack people of all conditions? Those well off as well as poorly conditioned folks?—It was found among all classes, but not in same degree.

You don't think it was of any specific nature?—No, I have seen the same kind of fever often at the close of the rains at Shahjehanpur. I had fifty boys down with it in a day.

Did most of these boys recover under treatment?—Yes.

(*Mr. Bose*).—You got a consignment of American wheat for this Division?—Yes.

Was it a large quantity?—[The witness in reply handed in a printed copy of certain correspondence on the subject of the distribution of the grain.]* I had to receive the consignment at Calcutta and distribute it.

This statement covers the entire quantity that came through you to this district?—No. I received the whole cargo at Calcutta and sent it out all over the country.

How were the other cargoes for the Central Provinces distributed?—There was one wagon load sent to Kamptee. A number went to Bilaspur and Raipur for the intermediate station of Bisrampur. Eighteen wagons went to Narsinghpur district. One to Hoshangabad, three to Saugor and three to Bina.

I believe some quantity went to Khandwa?—Yes, and to Akola and other places along the line there.

As far as you have been able to make out, it was readily taken up by the people?—Very readily.

It consisted mainly of maize?—There were 300 tons of rye, but the great bulk was maize.

In all, how much was distributed in the Central Provinces; can you tell me approximately?—I can send in the figures.

(*Mr. Fuller*).—What rate did you pay the workers on your relief-work? How did you regulate their wages?—We adopted the Government rate as far as possible. There were reductions made towards the close more rapidly than on our works.

Did you as a matter of fact find that the wage on works was a reasonable one, and did the men improve sufficiently?—Yes, they improved very nicely.

And that holds good for the rains as well as for the hot weather?—We gave them blankets in the rains however.

(*President*).—Did they on your works get the minimum wage or higher? The Government rates are *B* and *D*. Perhaps you don't know?—I am not aware of the B and *D* wages. In the main our wage was from 4 to 8 pice.

Rai Bahadur Ballabh Das.

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Rai Bahadur BALLABH DAS, Chairman, District Council, and President, Municipal Committee, Jabalpur, called in and examined.

(The witness gave his evidence in the vernacular.)

I put in written statement of evidence.

Extent and Severity of the Distress.

†1. The whole area of the district is 3,948 square miles and the population is 749,362 souls.

2. To the untimely rainfall resulting in the successive failure of the harvests.

Years.	Rainfall.				
	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.
1891-92	2·83	24·30	17·80	28·84	·51
1892-93	4·47	21·38	16·41	9·13	1·77
1893-94	20 71	9·86	22·54	16·36	3·80
1894-95	12 81	19·73	9·80	7·49	7·25
1895-96	17·55	13·47	18 42	1·43	·10

* Not printed.
† The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

3. Prices were higher than in other years. The prices in July 1868, 1878, and 1893 are compared with the prices in July 1897—

Years.	July.		
	Wheat.	Rice.	Gram.
1868	16·	11·	19·
1878	11·	9·50	11·
1893	15·	11·	20·
1897	8·75	6·	8·75

4. Average outturn yield of the past nine years as given below speaks for itself:—

1887-88 . . .	13	annas to the rupee.
1888-89 . . .	12	ditto.
1889-90 . . .	12	ditto.
1890-91 . . .	12	ditto.
1891-92 . . .	14	ditto.
1892-93 . . .	11	ditto.
1893-94 . . .	10	ditto.
1894-95 . . .	7	ditto.
1895-96 . . .	6	ditto.

5. Yes, it would have been so under the 30 years' settlement, but not under the present revised settlement. The cultivating and village labouring classes, the number of such labourers being 116,575 in 1891. The population of the cultivating class being 287,462, gives a percentage of 38 as compared with the population.

6. Owing to the absence of facilities for irrigation' agriculture is mainly dependent on the periodical rains.

7. The population of the affected area have no reserve of either money or grain for their support in the event of failure of one or more consecutive harvests, as they live from hand to mouth, and I apprehend that the recent revision of settlement adds to their difficulties in this respect. As regards the sections of the population that have not such reserves and what proportion of the total population of the affected area is so situated, see answer to question 5.

In this connection I give a comparative statement below shewing the enormous increase under certain heads in the Central Provinces which adds to the destitution of the people:—

Heads.	1863-64.	1893-94.
	Rs.	Rs.
Land Revenue . . .	54,61,515	69,22,222
Stamp	3,85,637	17,52,139
Excise	6,66,724	30,33,708
Forest	89,763	11,34,475
Registration	...	1,21,704
Income Tax	2,45,724	4,84,755
Miscellaneous . . .	1,77,229	23,37,448
Civil Cases	26,305	1,03,438
Revenue	4,303	12,229
Criminal	26,175	29,936
Population	92,57,229	1,07,84,294

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9. So far back as 1894-95, the late Mr. Duff correctly estimated the extent of famine, and I here quote from his report, but it was not till 1st October 1896 that famine was officially declared:—"The year under review, though hopeful at the earlier part of it, proved ultimately to be an exceptionally trying one to the agricultural classes and the labouring population. A good deal of capital sunk in seed grain has been entirely lost. All malguzars who lent seed to their tenants, have lost heavily in this way, and have had with few exceptions either to borrow from money-lenders or obtain takavi advances from Government in order to assist their tenants and keep their villages in cultivation. Gold and silver always used to be imported from Bombay into this town, but the reverse has latterly been the case. Instead of such imports there have been large exports of gold and silver ornaments to Bombay. The malguzars have heavy arrears to collect, and the cultivators in their turn have suffered much. Thus debts have grown heavier and many of them have been pinched for food. Even the better classes of cultivators have had to dispense with wheat as an article of diet, and content themselves with an inferior form of food. The labouring population has passed through a period of great distress and privation, and I regret to have to add that the outlook, at the present moment, is far from encouraging. I have had statistics prepared, to shew for each Revenue Inspector's Circle the malguzari rents outstanding at the beginning and at the close of the revenue years; these shew that the grand total of the outstanding rents was under seven lakhs at the beginning of year and had reached 14½ lakhs at the end of it. These figures themselves are eloquent to picture the real state of distress into which the cultivating classes have been plunged, and the serious difficulties in which many malguzars, hitherto reputed well-to-do men, have become involved. For it cannot be doubted that whatever be the character of the coming season, a great proportion of these rents will be found to be irrecoverable, and, in addition to these, great sums have also been sunk in seed grain advances, and the prospects of recovery are very gloomy." The general opinion was that it did affect the character and amount of relief provided.

Sufficiency and Economy of the Relief measures.

10. I think 15 per cent. is a fair estimate, as during the recent famine the percentage of persons on relief works was approximately 13 per cent. compared with about 1 per cent. in the previous famine.

12. In any severe famine like the past, in my opinion, over 50 per cent. of the cultivating and village "mazdoor" class require to be relieved, and in no case was the proportion of the total population relieved larger than was necessary to prevent loss of life or severe suffering.

No person was relieved, so far as I can gather, who was not really in need.

13. Yes, a larger proportion might have been relieved; take, for instance, those of the Mandla District and the wilder parts of most districts. The reason is, because relief has to be taken to them as they won't leave their homes to come to relief-works. This was due as much to the habits and customs of the people as to the faulty organization of relief.

15. (1) Relief measures have been partially successful.

(2) Yes, by more extensive and timely measures, mortality would not have been as great as it was.

16. When the relief-work was transferred from the Civil Officers to the Department of Public Works, and task works and breaking "gitti" enforced, the numbers on works fell: this decrease was due to the direct result of such changes, and it had the effect of excluding from relief those actually in need of it.

18. Yes.

19. So far as my knowledge goes, yes.

21. As already stated in answer to question No. 13 above, the numbers relieved appear to be comparatively small.

22. My experience is mainly confined to relief-works undertaken within Municipal limits, and the wage was barely a subsistence one.

23. Residence upon relief-works is disliked by the people, and it does not constitute an effective test.

25. The percentage of persons on relief-works in previous famines was about one, while the percentage on the late famine was about 13. It was due to the late famine being a severer one. Besides this, the cultivating and village labouring class and the people generally are now much more destitute than they were in previous famines.

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27. Besides cooked food in kitchens and money doles, gratuitous relief was given in poor-houses, but in my humble opinion the two former were given at a very late period of the distress, and would have been much more beneficial, had the system been started at an earlier period of famine.

28. In my opinion, the rules on the subject were very strictly observed.

29. In my opinion, gratuitous relief was not commenced early enough, nor has it demoralized the people in any way.

31. Famine loans were offered, but, as far as my knowledge goes, a very infinitesimal amount was taken, as the terms and conditions of the repayment of the loans were such as prevented people from taking advantage of them. The scarcity having lasted for successive years, not only the cultivating but also the land holding classes were impoverished, and consequently were not in a position to incur any liabilities. Suspensions and remissions were granted, but I am not in a position to give exact figures; but, as far as I am aware, it was only given when it was found absolutely impossible to recover the arrears due.

32. It will be difficult, if not utterly impossible, for the land-holding and cultivating classes to recover their former position, even within the next 15 years.

33. The relief measures prescribed in the Code are so far defective, that nothing permanently beneficial is the outcome of such labour. Instead of breaking metal and constructing new roads, which cannot in future be maintained, it would have been better, if the efforts of every one of the distressed people were directed to embankment of fields, excavation of tanks and works of a like nature; the agricultural community and thereby the general community would have been benefited to a large extent, and perhaps the workers themselves would take more interest in the work than they do in metal-breaking.

Extent to which departures have been made from the Famine Code.

39. Relief-works under Department of Public Works, and relief-works under Civil Officers, poor-house, kitchens, and doles in money and food; the two latter were, however, started, in my opinion, rather late. We ourselves finding that there were large numbers of indigent poor in the city of Jubbulpore opened a poor-house at our own expense for about 300 inmates, and maintained it for three months.

40. As Vice-President and President of the Jubbulpore Municipality, the relief-works started within the Jubbulpore Municipal limits were under my immediate control; moreover, a poor-house was established by us, and I was instrumental in establishing a poor-house in the city, which at first was maintained from private subscriptions and Municipal grants, and subsequently taken over by the Administration.

Relief-Works.

53. As President of the District Council, I am of opinion that the funds will not suffice for the up-keep of the roads.

55. Utterly useless.

57. I think village tanks are certainly much more suitable forms of relief labour than stone-breaking, and if constructed so as to be utilized for irrigation purposes, they would enhance the land revenue. On this subject I quote below a letter I addressed to the Local Administration:—

"With reference to your endorsement No. 2605, dated 14th instant, forwarding copy of a letter No. 400, dated 9th idem, from the Commissioner, Jubbulpore Division, in which that officer directs that the Council should be asked to state exactly what they wish to see done as regards the construction of irrigation and other works as protective measures, I am directed to state that what the Council would have wished to have seen undertaken, was the construction of a canal or canals either by the bunding up and utilizing the many small streams and nullas which intersect the district or by excavation. It is too late, however, to undertake any such work now, but without being alarmists, the Council wish to observe that there is nothing to show that the next 'kharif' and 'rabi' will be bumper crops. On the contrary, the present indications are that there will be an early monsoon, with probably an early cessation of the rains resulting in a more or less short crop. Moreover, owing to various causes, *i.e.*, want of seed grain, plough-cattle, etc., etc., it is reasonable to suppose that the area under crop will largely contract, and for these reasons the Council are strongly of opinion that steps should at once be taken to prepare and keep in readiness a programme of irrigation works to be undertaken by relief labour, in case of necessity arising although it is now too late to undertake any large irrigation work. The Council are of opinion that much can still be done, not only to improve the water-supply of the villages, but to utilize, where circumstances permit, the water-supply for irrigation purposes. A large mass of information and statistics were collected, the Council believe, for the construction by *corvée* or *begari* labour of wells and tanks under the Village Sanitation Act. This information is to hand, and wells and tanks can at once be undertaken in villages listed as requiring them, and there is still two to two and-a-half months during which this form of labour can still be carried on. There is another form of relief labour which might be undertaken and which does not need technical skill, *viz.*, the bunding of fields."

To sum up.

The Council wish to see:—

(1) A programme of irrigation works in the shape of canals, etc., prepared and kept ready to be undertaken in the future if necessity should arise.

(2) Tanks and wells, the bunding of nallas and small streams, both for irrigation and drinking purposes, put in hand at once.

(3) Bunding of fields undertaken.

The Council understand that a census of all relief-workers has been or is about to be taken, and it should not be difficult to send back to their respective villages men on relief works to be employed on relief-works undertaken in the village, or the villagers of contiguous villages might be utilized to construct tanks and wells in each other's villages. In the case of embanking fields, if it is considered that this work should not be carried out indiscriminately, the fields of the poorest raiyats and those that have been brought next door to beggary, by the succession of bad crops, might be undertaken.

The bunding of their fields will help to bring them back to their former status.

The Council are sure that malguzars will readily come forward to render such assistance as lies in their power to help in looking after and supervising the construction of wells, the excavation of tanks, the bunding of nallas and embanking of fields. The Council think that the breaking of "gitti" is a work which might as usefully be carried out during the rains. I have roughly outlined what the Council would wish to see done, and the Council trust that they will have your strong support of the measures proposed by them.

59 (2). I am strongly of opinion that relief-works should be undertaken in a village itself and supervised either by the malguzars or a Committee of the well-to-do residents of the village with the patwari as Secretary to Committee.

60. Little or nothing has been done towards the excavation of tanks during the past famine as far as I am aware.

61. None, so far as I am aware. Please see my letter referred to in para. 57.

62. Irrigation works would certainly enhance the yield of crops.

63. It would be advisable if a special officer were deputed for this duty.

67. There are very many small streams in the Jubbulpore District, such as the Gour, Hiran and others, which might perhaps be usefully bunded for irrigation purposes.

Large and small works and the distance test.

71. (*a*) One mile.

(*b*) Five miles.

72. No, as in a very short time these would be reduced to a condition which would necessitate their being gratuitously relieved at their homes.

73. No.

77 and 77 (*a*). Yes.

78. No, the establishment is not large enough.

82. Yes, during the rainy and cold weather.

129. Not less than 1,500 and not more than 2,000.

130. This is absolutely necessary and should be given to all children under the age of 10.

(A)—Interference with supply of labour to private employers.

133. No; for instance to find employment for the labourers, I started, about two or three years ago, certain building works on which about 1,000 labourers were employed, and about 700 at the mills, and the opening of relief-works did not affect the supply of labour.

(B)—Interference with supply of labour to private employers.

141. No.

146. It is not possible for private employers to find labour for number of persons who are actually in distress so as to obviate the necessity of Government relief-works.

Gratuitous Relief.

151. In ordinary years, they either find an existence by begging or are helped by their relations.

154. The number of relief-workers is no criterion of the amount of gratuitous relief required.

156. Yes, I would give gratuitous relief to such persons for the simple reason that the able-bodied relations hardly earn enough to support themselves in times of distress.

157. Gratuitous relief at home is only sought after by persons who are physically incapacitated for out-door work.

160. In my opinion, no.

161. My experience was, that gratuitous help by the State was given long after private charity had commenced. There are some forms of charity which will be continued by orthodox Hindus whether the State gives gratuitous relief or not.

165. In my opinion, both are absolutely necessary. The kitchens for the lower classes and home-relief for the better classes.

166. It is possible to reach all by the opening of a kitchen in each village, but the supervision of such would be a matter of difficulty.

167. In cash. In my opinion, partly in grain, partly in cash would be preferable.

168. At their homes generally.

As to Poor-Houses.

172. The population of the poor-houses was large continuously throughout the year. The worst months were January to July 1897.

173. The inmates were chiefly drawn from the labouring classes. About 4 per cent. of the population were agricultural classes.

174. Persons of better castes and respectable position strongly object to resort to the poor-houses for relief. The promiscuous huddling of castes is one of the chief causes of unpopularity of the poor-houses. People will rather die of hunger than break through the bonds of caste. Many, specially of the lower classes, had to be put into the poor-house by pressure to prevent their going about the city begging.

175. I had no experience of any previous famine, but I know that the people shewed great reluctance to accept the poor-house relief. The chief causes for this are:—

(*a*) Loss of personal liberty.

(*b*) Insufficient food.

(*c*) Caste prejudices.

176. The mortality of the poor-house population was exceptionally high for the months of January to August 1897; it fell off after that. The increased mortality during the first four months of the year was principally due to acuteness of the distress which was then prevailing throughout the district. People were admitted in a moribund state. Many had their physiques so completely broken down that no amount of care and nourishment could bring them round. The village-relief system was not in vogue at the time, and people clung to their hearths and homes with a tenacity which is peculiarly Indian, in spite of starvation which stared them in the face.

177. Full 40 per cent. of the poor-house inmates were wanderers who had migrated from other Provinces or from the Native States.

178. The physical condition of the persons and the distances they had travelled, clearly indicated the existence of a very acute form of famine, which had broken up households and caused people to migrate to long distances to eke out precarious existences in the best way they could.

179. The following measures were taken to keep down the population of the poor-house:— *Rai Bahadur Ballabh Das.* *16th Mar. 1898.*

(*a*) Able-bodied people were drafted to the relief-works.

(*b*) Many others of less strong physique were sent home to their villages under village-relief system.

These measures were systematically carried out.

180. The ration prescribed in Section 82 of the Famine Code is insufficient. As a visitor to the city poor-house I used to hear complaints about this insufficient food very often.

I made careful enquiries about the matter, and was convinced that the prescribed scale of rations does not come up to the requirements. The scale should be modified. Minimum ration should be 10 chittacks *atta* or *rice* and 2 chittacks *dhal*.

The dietary had to be varied in case of the infirm and sick in the hospital. It was left to the option of the Medical Officer to prescribe diet for these cases.

181. More detailed rules for the management of the poor-houses are necessary. Special rules should be made about proper separation of castes. All castes should not be indiscriminately mixed up together. It would be better if raw grain is given to the higher castes instead of cooked food.

182. Yes, I think legal powers are necessary to send persons to the poor-house against their will. Some compulsion was used by the District authorities for sending paupers for detention in the poor-house.

183. Niwar-weaving, twine-making, basket-making, were done to a certain extent by the poor-house inmates; this work was only spasmodically done, and the result was not satisfactory.

184. Yes, in some cases compulsion had to be used. The inmates were not free to leave when they chose. There were a few escapes but not many, as strict watch was kept both by night and day by the Police.

As to Relief Centres

189. As far as I am aware, village-relief and kitchens were started late in the famine. Whereas, in my opinion, they should have started simultaneously with relief-works. If relief-works were actually started in each village or in groups of villages with a mile radius, I am of opinion that there would be fewer cases for village gratuitous relief, such cases being confined solely to those who are unable to work.

The agricultural classes would prefer to remain at or near their own village, in preference to going elsewhere to relief-centres, as these would enable them to look after their own homesteads. The labouring classes having no vested interest in the land, would not be so great sufferers in resorting to relief-centres away from their village.

192. Voluntary unofficial agency was amply available, but was very little utilized. In this connection, I would invite perusal of report by G. J. Nicholls.

Relief Kitchens.

193. They serve a very useful purpose for all those who are not above accepting it.

194. In my opinion, they should be established both at relief-works and wherever adequate supervision is available.

198. In my opinion, cooked food should be given to the children instead of money doles to their parents.

Loans to Cultivators and Landholders.

200. In every case it was not wholly spent on the work for which it was granted. In majority of cases, there is no doubt that a portion of the money taken as advances under the Loans Act was repaid to the Government as land revenue, but it will be difficult to substantiate this.

201. The advances have certainly been of much benefit to the cultivating classes, and if more had been given, greater would have been the advantage.

204. It is a well known fact that cultivators went on to relief-works when they sold everything they possessed, and my opinion is that they should receive subsistence advance at home before they are reduced to such straits.

205. Certainly, in my opinion, it is more economical to aid the cultivators to such advances.

206. It is only when a cultivator has the means of paying that he will have the courage to borrow from Government;

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for, as a rule, cultivators are chary to borrow from Government, because repayment to Government is attended with greater inconvenience than to a money-lender to whom he can repay on altered terms, and in case of non-payment of an instalment due, the lender would give him a further grace, or even advance a further sum with the hope of the recovery of the whole debt, and when they have not the means to repay, they in such cases would prefer going on to the relief-works.

Suspensions and Remissions of Land Revenue.

207. I believe only about three and-a-quarter lakhs have been suspended up to date in parts of the districts affected by the late famine, and this merely represents the difference between the former (*a*) and current (*b*) settlement demands. The system on which either remissions or suspensions have been granted has, I understand, not been uniform, *e.g.*, in the case of a wealthy malguzar paying up the Government demand, no remissions or suspensions have been granted ; or, in other words, remissions and suspensions have been granted on the status of the malguzar, and not on the necessities or circumstances of the cultivators.

Revenue demand.	Cesses.
(*a*) Last Settlement about . 575,000	40,000
(*b*) Current Settlement about 900,000 . .	75,000

208. Legislation apparently is necessary to ensure that the relief thus given reaches the cultivating tenants.

209. Remissions and suspensions not having been made in time, they had no appreciable effect in either keeping them away from relief-works or from falling into debt.

210. Under the recent remissions of assessment, both revenue and rent being fixed comparatively higher than at the last settlement, it is reasonable to suppose that the revenue will not be recoverable without pressing heavily on the landholders and indirectly on the cultivating classes.

212. No ; it does not carry interest, nor ought it.

215. I cannot say to what extent private indebtedness of the landowning and cultivating classes has increased. But this much I can say that indebtedness has considerably increased. Yes, in certain cases there is no doubt that the recent famine has irretrievably ruined landholders ; and in this connection I would refer the Commission to the Court of Wards for actual figures for whom the Court had to borrow. In many instances ultimate ruin will be the result.

The Use made of Forests.

216. Forests were thrown open for the free collection of edible roots, fruits, grass and fuel ; but here also, in my humble opinion, these measures were given effect to rather late.

217. Yes.

218. Not that I am aware of.

219. Edible roots and fruits.

Orphans.

220. They should, as far as possible, be handed over to such of their co-religionists as are willing to take them ; the remainder should be maintained in State orphanages.

221. In my opinion, payment should continue to be made from the State till such time as the orphans are able to earn for themselves, and, as far as possible, no proselytism should be permitted.

Private Charitable Relief as Auxiliary to State Relief.

227. The firm of which I am one of the principals, was instrumental in opening cheap-grain shops in the city, both on our own account and through money supplied from the Indian Charitable Funds ; and I can from personal knowledge say that they proved a success and supplied a pressing want.

228. The opening of cheap-grain shops certainly entails loss on private grain-dealers. Such shops were started in this city, and in certain cases proved a decided loss to private traders.

229. Yes, the opening of these shops had the effect of preventing fitful raising of rates ; but, not being numerous enough, the advantages were not widespread.

230. Help should certainly be given just before the commencement of the agricultural season.

234. They have supplied a useful purpose in supplementing rations, clothing, seed grain, plough-cattle, "khawai," maintenance of orphans, and towards relieving poor but respectable persons.

237. Food and clothing.

239. Certainly.

240. Yes. Under this head I cannot help but remark that the people of India are ever grateful for the help rendered by the charitable people of England in India's great distress.

Mortality during Famine.

248. To obtain any accurate and reliable information on this point, it will be necessary to take another census at once, otherwise any information given would be merely based on unreliable data. Many villages since the recent famine have been almost wholly depopulated. The ratio of deaths per thousand of population will be found to be as noted below :—

Year.	Population as per Census of 1891 ; 749,362.	
	Deaths.	Average per thousand.
1893	22,557	30
1894	29,374	39
1895	30,421	40
1896	47,209	63
1897	53,977	71

249. As no statistics appear to have been maintained, no definite figures can be given ; but there is no doubt many deaths were due directly and indirectly to famine.

251. Yes.

255. Yes. Parents abandoned their children, *i.e.*, they gave them over to the well-to-do persons for support.

Pressure of Population.

259. The population of census taken in—

1871.	1881.	1891.
528,859	687,233	749,362.

According to this, the present population should be 815,512, but if a census were taken now, there is not the slightest doubt that the population will shew a considerable decrease.

264. The area under food-grain has not increased with the increased population.

266. The wages of labouring classes, owing to emigration and deaths on account of the famine, increased ; the wages of the village labourers have consequently increased, thus entailing extra expense on malguzars and lessening their profits from their villages.

270. As these Provinces are sparsely populated, the land will bear an increase in population.

Ordinary Food of the People.

273. By the well-to-do labourers and artizans in towns wheat, rice, dhal, arhar, massoor and moong, also milk and ghee. In villages where wheat and rice are only grown, they use both. In forest villages where the kharif crops are only grown, they use kodo and kutki.

274. Such as are in good circumstances eat two meals a day, others have only one meal a day ; but during the recent famine all found it difficult to get even one meal a day.

275. In the absence of the ordinary food-grains during the recent famine, the people had to content themselves with oil-cakes, roots, and the bark of trees, and even this they found it difficult to procure at times.

276. These substitutes are neither palatable nor digestible, but necessity nd starvation compel them to eat these.

277. They have no objections, and willingly eat any grain which is given them when so pressed by necessity.

278. ' ice, dhal and wheat, and at the latter, milk and sago.

279. Twice a day at poor-houses, *vide* scale below :—

	For men.	For women.
Atta or rice	18 oz.	1 lb.
Pulse	4 ,,	4 oz.
Salt	½ ,,	½ ,,
Ghee or oil	½ ,,	½ ,,
Condiments or Vegetables	2 ,,	2 ,,

and at kitchens only once a day, I believe.

280. The only complaint was for extra diet and wheat cake to which they had been accustomed, but which the Medical Officer considered injurious to them in their weak state.

281. In jail, the average cost per head during 1896 was R2-4-0 per month. At poor-houses the average cost was R1-10-9.

Food Stock and prices.

282. The high level of prices, as far as I am aware, was due to the failure of harvest.

283. The fall in the price of rupee resulted in the fall of price of silver, the majority of natives have silver ornaments, and all their savings are invested in silver ornaments, and in parting with these during the recent famine, they had to sustain heavy losses, *viz.*, varying from 30 to 40 per cent. There has been a permanent rise in average price of food-grains within the last 20 years. The rise has been in all kinds of food-grains.

283 (*a*). The recent famine being almost general on the line of railway, the difference in prices was very little, as wherever grain was a little cheap, large purchases were made which levelled the rates all round.

284. The famine being as much one of money as of grain and the prices being almost uniform throughout India, no active trade was possible ; but as soon as the Burma rice crop was a favourable one, the traders imported large quantities ; this, however, was mainly in the hands of the Kachi memons who hailed from Gujrat.

285. Grain was cheaper in the towns than in the villages, and was sent from the towns to the villages for seed as well as for consumption, and had to be paid for much higher.

286. No ; they were not, and this is borne out by the fact, that had it not been so the Government would not have got us to send grain to outlying districts.

287. Grain was freely exported from one distressed tract to another, where it could be sold with profit ; this was due to higher prices.

288. The people of the country, who have an interest in the land and deal in grain in the years of plenty, had to husband their resources for the maintenance of the tenants. Those, however, who trade merely in grain, made a little money, but certainly did not amass anything like a fortune. There were no time-bargains made to any appreciable extent.

289. All grain-pits and godowns were opened and completely depleted, and more grain had to be imported from other provinces and countries; for instance, Burma and America.

290. There were no surplus stocks.

291. Those who had grain to sell to dealers, disposed of the same at the market rates.

292. Yes ; they were.

293. The diminished storage of grain has been the result of high prices and decrease in yields.

294. Private trade is always ready to export where there is a surplus.

296. Labouring and agricultural classes.

297. To want of money and to the failure of crops and want of labour.

298. No ; because all were more or less affected by the famine, and all works were stopped.

299. The produce of Indian and foreign mills has affected the hand-weaver class seriously.

303. It would affect private trade, but nevertheless prices could have been lowered.

304. Kachi memons.

305. Yes ; from Burma. Yes ; import by Government would be beneficial, private trades would be affected, but the starving poor would be benefited.

Addenda and Corrigenda.

77(*a*). Yes ; the aborigines and forest tribes object to going any long distance.

113(*a*). Certainly ; yes.

113(*b*). Yes.

282. The rise was reasonable and fairly proportionate to the failure of harvest.

305. I know of no rings.

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(*President*).—Are you President of the Municipality and the Chairman of the District Council?—Yes.

In how many districts of this province do you hold landed property?—I hold landed property in the districts of Jubbulpur, Saugor, Mandla, Narsinghpur, Chanda, Wardha, Hoshangabad, Raipur, Seoni and Damoh.

Did you visit your villages during the famine ?—No.

In your reply to question No. 5 you say the revised settlements have fixed the assessments very high. Is it so?—Yes. The revised assessments are high.

In your reply to question No. 7 you state that the collections from excise duty in 1863-64 amounted to R7,00,000 and that in 1893-94 the collections under the same head amounted to R27,00,000. How would you account for the increase?—Habits of the people and monopoly at the highest bid.

Where did you come to get these figures?—From the Administration Report.

In what month did Mr. Duff report on the famine?—I do not recollect the month. The Land Revenue Report was written in 1894-95.

Do you hold that relief works should have been started in 1894-95?—Yes, I do.

In reply to question No. 55 you say the value of metal collection was useless. Is it so?—Yes, I have said so.

Were not the metal collections by the relief works made over to the Municipality found of use to it?—Yes, the quantity received was brought into use.

Did you construct any tanks in your villages?—I have had earth thrown into the fields and embankments made. My villages are such that embankments are required in preference to tanks.

In your reply to question No. 25 you state that "the people generally are now much more destitute than they were in the previous famine." What evidence have you in support of this assertion?—The percentage of persons on relief works in previous famine was about 1, while the percentage of such persons in the late famine was about 13 : this shows that destitution during the last famine was much heavier than that of the previous famine.

Is there any other cause which led to the increased destitution?—The income of the people diminished while subsistence charges increased.

Did village relief benefit the people?—Yes. After Mr. Fuller assumed charge of the Division village relief and kitchens were started which greatly alleviated the distress and reduced the percentage of mortality.

In what month and on what date did you address the letter you refer to in your reply to question 57?—I forgot to note the date and month in the reply.

Did you in your letter cited above recommend the breaking of gittee?—I consider the construction of embankment preferable to the breaking of gittee by men who find a difficulty in breaking gittee, but ease in constructing embankments.

Can works started in villages be supervised with facility and ease?—Such work should be entrusted to a village committee formed by Mukaddums and Malguzars, but estimates and statements must be prepared beforehand, and an overseer should see to their being properly managed. The committee to keep accounts of the expenses, and the whole business to be under the supervision of Government officers.

Did the rate at which you paid the men continue?—Yes, it did, and it was even reduced a little during famine.

Did all the men attend the works after you had reduced the rates of wages?—Yes, they did, and even more men began coming in.

What was the rate of grain at the time?—First, the rate was 13 and 14 seers per rupee ; it fell afterwards to 8 seers.

Do you consider the wages allowed to labourers at the rates sufficed for their maintenance ?—Artisans such as masons and carpenters who before earned 6 annas a day, volunteered to work at 5 annas per diem as labour was not in demand. Beldars who used to earn 2 annas 6 pies to 3 annas

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a day volunteered similarly to work at 2 annas and 2½ annas a day. Women and children who used to get 1¾ and 1½ annas a day willingly placed their services at 1½ and 1¼ annas a day.

In your reply to question No. 175 you say that "insufficient food" was served out by the poor-house relief. What reason have you to say so?—The inmates of the poor-house, I observed, after eating what was served out, demanded more bread and eatables, but they were allowed according to scale prescribed by the Medical Officer. I started a private poor-house in which people were allowed different sorts of eatables and with these they were well satisfied.

In your reply to question No. 198 you recommend cooked food being given to the children instead of money doles to their parents. Do you think the parents gave insufficient food to their children?—The parents first satisfied their hunger by what they had before them, and then gave what remained to their children; hence children were insufficiently fed, and left partly suffering from hunger.

Were children allowed money doles separately?—Yes; the parents retained the money doles, sending off the children to the town to beg. On several occasions the children were seen seating themselves at the drains and picking up refuse food-grains and grain washings passing through them and helping themselves with them.

In your reply to question No. 215 you say that "the recent famine has irretrievably ruined land-holders." What do you consider to be the cause of this?—In my own zemindari villages I have been put to a loss of some 20 lakhs of rupees owing to the high assessments made at the last revised settlements and the recent famine. This loss includes—amount due to me for former years; amount spent towards improvement; arrears of rent of previous years. If necessary, I am prepared to produce my account books to prove this.

In reply to question No. 220 you appear to say that orphans should not be made over to State orphanages. Why so?—The people have very strong objections to making over orphans to Missions, as a Hindoo once converted cannot be re-admitted into his own religion.

In your reply to question No. 248 you state that "to obtain any accurate and reliable information on mortality, it will be necessary to take another census at once", or in other words, that the mortality returns were unreliable?—I produce the papers of Mozuah Myli in Mandla, Settlement No. 741, showing that out of 26 cultivators in the village 10 had either died or deserted, leaving 16 only residing in the village.

Can you produce similar statement for any other of your villages?—I produce the statement as regards Mouzah Ghugriin, Zillah Mandla, Settlement No. 652, showing that about half the number of original inhabitants were left.

Can you give me the exact number which this half contained?—Half.

Are these villages of the kind known as "Barra" and where are they situated?—These are situated in a taluka known by the name of Tarwani and are hilly villages.

Have you prepared any similar statement for villages situated in the Jabalpur district?—I have no statements for the Jabalpur villages.

Have the rates of labour increased in the city and in the interior?—In consequence of the decrease in the number of labourers the rate of wages has risen.

What led to the decrease in the number of labourers?—Famine.

Did people come for harvesting from Rewah?—Yes, but the number was small. The same may be said of men coming from parts of this country.

In answer to question No. 283 you allude to the fall of price of silver. What was the result of this fall?—In this country it has been the custom for people to keep their savings in silver or silver ornaments; but by the fall of value of silver from 30 to 40 per cent., they have been losers by sale of the silver and silver ornaments.

You say that the people during the past famine sold the greater portion of the ornaments they possessed. How is this borne out?—Not only the ornaments but even the cooking utensils were disposed of by the people. If you please I can prove this from the account books of persons who purchased them. As another evidence I may refer the Commission to Mr. Duff's report.

Did the goldsmiths purchase these ornaments or others?—Surrafs or petty dealers purchased them and exported to Bombay.

Were the ornaments sent to Bombay or proceeds of their sale?—Ornaments were melted and silver and gold in bullion were sent to Bombay.

What led the labouring and cultivating classes to greater destitution as averred by you in reply to question No. 25?—The cultivating classes had no income from agriculture, so that the labouring classes could not find employment under them, while the cultivating classes being without funds could not manage satisfactorily to conduct their business and reap full harvests. The result has been that the produce of wheat grain and rice has been decreasing daily as shown below:—

The produce in—

1891-92	was	14	annas	in	the rupee.
1892-93	„	11	„	„	„
1893-94	„	10	„	„	„
1894-95	„	7	„	„	„
1895-96	„	6	„	„	„

What is your age?—I am 38 years old.

With what year's incident do you compare the present state of things?—With those of the famine in 1878.

Were the people then in a better condition?—Yes, they were not so destitute as they now are.

What had led to their subsequent destitution—famine or anything else?—They possessed very little and subsequently were reduced to extremities. Famine and the high assessments at the revised settlement have added to their miseries and ruined them.

How can you vouch for circumstances which occurred so long ago? You could scarcely call to recollection incidents which occurred 20 or 25 years ago?—I heard all that had occurred in former years from a number of old gentlemen.

In reply to question No. 31 you state that the terms as regards receiving Taccavi were very hard. What do you mean by this? Please explain?—The people are very much afraid of borrowing money from Government, and they borrow only after they are convinced of their capacity for making the repayment.

Do you mean to say that the terms are reasonable but the people are afraid?—In the case of advances made by Government the money must be repaid on the date due, otherwise the borrower has to meet troubles. But in the case of native money-lenders when payment is not made on the due date, a protracted period is allowed for the purpose to the borrower, and even further advances are made to replenish the borrower's funds in the hope of recovering the first and subsequent advances in full.

You have stated that the Land Revenue for 1863-64 amounted to ₹52,00,000 and that the same in 1893-94 amounted to ₹73,00,000. Have you calculated what the revenue falls on an acre?—I have not calculated the revenue on an acre.

Can Mokuddums and Malguzars be entrusted with supervision of works?—Yes.

Do you mean to say that metal collections should not be made altogether?—Villagers cannot break out "gittees" properly, besides which they do not earn sufficient for their maintenance from such work, whereas such men can do better earthwork business.

In your reply to question No. 184 you say that the inmates of the poor-house had to be kept therein under watch of the Police. If the house was not so guarded, do you think the inmates would have escaped?—Yes.

Did they dislike remaining together at one place?—Yes, they disliked it because they preferred begging and wandering in view to securing additional diet in the shape of bread.

Were you a Member of the Poor-house Committee when it was organized?—Yes.

What was the amount subscribed for the Poor-house?—About ₹3,000 at the first meeting.

Were works started by the Municipality for the relief of the poor?—Yes.

Were any works started by the District Council?—Funds were taken from the District Board and work started through the Department of Public Works.

What amount was spent on these works by the Municipality?—I cannot at this moment say what the amount was.

You say that at the Revised Settlements assessments have been fixed very high. But do you not know that no enhancement on cultivators' holdings have been made?—It is true no enhancements have been made on the holdings of ordinary tenants, but the Malguzars themselves had raised their rents so high as to render recovery impossible; hence the enhancement was merely a nominal one.

Were remissions allowed to cultivators?—Very little and not sufficient.

Malguzars expressed their dissatisfaction on occasions of remissions being granted to their tenants, was it not so?—Yes. It was from misconception and foolishness.

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SIRISH CHANDER RAI CHOWDHRI, Vakil and Member of Landholders Association, Jabalpur, called in and examined.

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I put in a written statement of evidence and written answers to the Commission's questions.

1. The late famine or distress in the district was due to several causes of which the immediate cause was the inability of the people to buy high priced food grain. Rains cannot be said to have failed, excepting perhaps the late monsoons of the year 1896 and 1897, but that alone cannot explain the severity of the distress or the poverty of the succeeding winter crops. For both the wet and winter crops "late monsoon (from September up to December)" is said to be the most important factor; copious winter rains are hardly necessary, heavy dew supplies their place. But a good winter crop which supplies the staple food of the northern districts depends much more on deep ploughing before the rains, healthy seed, selection of sowing time, etc., than on heavy "late monsoon" which on the other hand may, in some cases, be injurious. I cite certain examples:—

Year.	Late monsoon.	Outturn wheat.	Grain.	Average.
	Inches.	As.	As.	As.
1887-88 . . .	15¾	16	16	16
1888-89 . . .	2¾	12	13	12½
1891-92 . . .	29	14	15	14½
1893-94 . . .	22	4	14	9
1894-95 . . .	17	3	6	4½
1895-96 . . .	1¾	8	10	9
1885-86 . . .	4¾	11	7	9

Compare the years 1888-89 and 1895-96 with 1885-86.

It is therefore impossible to lay blame solely on the clouds for the distress that prevailed during the last three years in this district.

In the year 1894-95 nearly three lacs and in 1895-96 nearly 460,000 acres were not cropped out of little more than 13 lacs of acres in holdings, for which rent and revenue were payable. The fact was that the agriculturists had not sufficient seed grain or capital for cultivation. Most of them had parted with their bullocks for payment of land taxes and debts and had eaten up the seed grain.

The following table will explain matters better:—

Year.	Area under crop.	Out-turn of wheat, grain and rice.	
	Thousands.	Annas.	
1887-88 . . .	1,043	13	
1888-89 . . .	887	12	
1889-90 . . .	947	12	
1890-91 . . .	1,066	12	
1891-92 . . .	1,014	14	Unusual good fall of rain.
1892-93 . . .	1,070	11	
1893-94 . . .	1,099	10	
1894-95 . . .	1,074	9	Wheat, 3 annas. Area in holdings 13½ lacs of acres assessed by Government.
1895-96 . . .	890	8 „ 8 „	
		9)101	
		11 „	

Thus with the exception of the year 1891-92 the production may be said to have been decreasing in a graduating scale. From the year 1893-94 revenue was payable on 13½ lacs of acres, whereas not more than 10½ lacs were (during the last ten years) ever cultivated; the assessment was made on 16 annas crop of the whole area, but the outturn never exceeded an average of 10 or 11 annas on the cropped area. I take it then that the distress of 1895, 1896, 1897 was due to raiyats or agriculturists' inability to carry on his trade. He had not good seed to sow, the produce of the year previous being what is called jhiri or thin and "shrivelled wheat." A child born of weak parents can not stand any severe strain disease. The dry winter of 1895-96 would not have done such injury to healthy seedlings or if the agriculturists had capital or if they had ploughed up their fields before the monsoon set in, and thus caught sufficient moisture; the want of sufficient rains would have been also remedied by irrigation. Want of irrigation, manuring and deep ploughing, together with ignorance in the art of selecting seed for sowing, are at the root of failure of harvests. I have always with great regret observed that the agricultural cattle (about two lacs in this district) are underfed and not sufficiently strong for deep ploughing, the want of which disables the soil from retaining large quantities of moisture. In the Haveli, where 72 per cent. rabi (winter crop) is sown, the raiyats give grain to bullocks in the working seasons only, and do not at all plough the soil in order to catch and retain rain water on the fields. They are not provided against a short "late monsoon". I have elsewhere pointed out that had the provisions of Sections 6 and 16* been complied with in the summer of 1895 and lands improved by "village relief works", a good part of the evil of 1896 might have been provided for. The raiyat does not even know how to catch a large quantity moisture, nor does he drain his field in case of heavy rain. The most ordinary precaution of not sowing any such two description of crops in the same field as are injurious to each other is never taken by him. The participators of the agricultural produce have made repeated enhanced assessments, but not a rupee had been spent to improve the soil or to educate the raiyats in their trade. In countries where the rainfall is more fitful, the tenants do not suffer in the way they have done in Central Provinces. There art resists the nature.

* Central Provinces Famine Code.

It follows therefore that continued short outturns and a heavy enhancement of land taxes are more at the bottom of the late distress than the dry winter of 1894 or 1896, or the excessive moisture of 1895 or the late monsoon of 1896. What little stock of grain the agriculturists had was sufficient for their food for one year, but not for two, while they would not sell them excepting at fancy prices. They had some sort of reserve for seed also, but it had to be sold out for payment of rent and revenue. But the purchasing public derived no benefit from these reserves. The prices therefore went up, and as soon as the kharif prospect was lost the worst famine began; there was no import of the staple food grain (wheat) in the year 1895-96. The proportion of the population that had to purchase grain will be apparent from the following table. Total population about 7½ lacs. I have excluded infants ½ lac:—

1. Agriculturists . . .	2¾ lacs.	They did not suffer from want of food.
2. Agricultural labourers . .	1½ „	They are paid by grain in proportion to outturn, these suffered most.
3. Others depending on agriculturists for support . .	1 lac.	These also suffered.
4. Persons following service in the towns or large villages but income less than 10 rupees a month	about 1 lac.	Being purchasers of grain suffered as above.
5. Well to do	„	Did not suffer from distress.

The famine (due to high price of grain) was not born in this district; it travelled into it from Saugor District through Damoh. In 1892-93 the winter crops of Saugor were very poor; the rate of wheat was 12 seers as against 16 or 17 seers

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of Jabalpur. In 1894 the rate in Saugor was 11¼ seers to the rupee and 10 seers in Damoh, bringing down the Jabalpur rate to 12 seers in November, a rate from which Jabalpur never emerged, not even now. At this stage Sections 15, 5, and 6 of the Famine Code should have been followed.

It was not until that the people in these districts suffered for nearly two years from these high rates and the monsoon of 1896-97 again became deficient that Central Provinces Administration applied for (23rd October 1896) sanction to spend 5 lacs of rupees. The Chief Commissioner did not apprehend a severe distress until it became plain than the kharif (rice, kodon, kutki and non-nutritious grain) of 1896 will also fail. But it may be asked whether kharif (area about 3⅓ lacs of acres out of 10 lacs) alone could feed the district (of which the staple food was wheat) or do any good to it after four crops had failed. The Chief Commissioner admitted that in the two years immediately previous to this, crops had failed, but what steps were taken to feed the agricultural labourers and others similarly affected? District Council spent Rs. 30,000 on 3 lacs of men in six months (*vide* Chief Commissioner's letter to Government of India dated 16th December 1896).* Persons having grain stocks then raised the prices another 25 per cent. more in October 1896. It was in this month that the Local Government formally recognized the famine and ordered 13 relief centres to be opened which gave relief to 10,000 souls. In his letter dated 24th October 1896† the Commissioner of Jabalpur argued that the time for village inspection and relief had not even then arrived. It is impossible for one district to be in good condition when its neighbours are suffering from scarcity and its concomitant the epidemics.

* Printed in Central Provinces Gazette of January 1897.

† Printed in Central Provinces Gazette of January 1897.

During the whole of this period the Provincial famine contribution was Rs. 20,000 only, out of Rs. 25 lacs collected under Additional Rates Act (as Famine Insurance). In November 1896 the distress in these districts had become nearly two years old, during which period it had been attempted to be combated with the feeble aid of the District Board, Municipalities and private charity, but they were too weak for the task. What is worse, the District Board of Jabalpur was directed to place its funds in the hands of the Public Works Department which worked by contracts while contractors employed only the able-bodied persons. That might have been proper in the commencement, but after a few months when the numbers of the sick, weak and half-famished increased, such works did not at all help them.

A distress or famine is like any other disease, which, if not checked in the commencement, gets beyond the control of the doctor. So did the late distress. In February 1897 it really became too big to manage even with a large additional staff. I am aware of the fact that a Railway was being constructed in the borders of this district that really helped the neighbouring sufferers in the year previous. But I am certain that contract system was even there followed, and one big contractor used to give only one seer of rice a day for an able-bodied man and his dependants. Cholera attacked the gangs under-fed and exposed to weather, carrying away several and with them a Collector of Jabalpur (in the spring of 1896) to untimely graves. On 22nd of December 1896 a public meeting was held in Jabalpur in which matters were fully discussed, and a memorial was submitted to the Local Government; I append herewith a printed copy‡ thereof. It describes what had then been done, and what was required to be done in order to mitigate the distress. The then prevailing rate of mortality of nearly 150 per mille (instead of 25) will speak for itself. I fully acknowledge that, when the gravity of the situation was realized, every thing under Providence was done, but, also, too late!

The Famine Code of the Central Provinces required (Section 5) that when the prices of the food grain rise 20 per cent., a report should be submitted to the Local Government.

According to Section 6, clause C, a programme of relief works in the vicinity of villages tending to improve agriculture should be provided for and reported to the Government of India (Appendix 1, Form C) in the month of June. I submit, therefore, that in May or June 1895 (when the prices of food-grain fell from 15 seers to 12 seers) and the outturn was only 9 annas, this should have been done at once. But village relief was not undertaken until the year 1897. Gratuitous relief in the villages sufficient to keep the people at home was not undertaken until even much later on. The Famine Code allows too much latitude to an unwilling officer, he should be bound down by fixed rules as to what he must do when either or both the prices and mortality rise above 20 per cent. The words "Distress" and "Famine" are not defined, and several officers interpreted them very differently. In my estimate of food supply of the district, which will be found further on, I have shewn that in an average year of 12 annas § crop, the agriculturists commence to suffer privation, and that severe distress must begin whenever the outturn is less than 10 annas. Section 16 of the Famine Code therefore rightly lays down that when "a failure of harvest or scarcity has declared itself," certain reports shewing the number of persons employed in relief-works should be submitted. The question then is for the Commission to find out that how many persons were employed in relief works in June 1895 when the staple food, wheat produce (spring crop), was only 3 annas to the rupee (of 16 annas the full crop), and on the top of two bad years, the average outturn of rice, wheat and gram was only 9 annas to 16 annas.

§ Three-fourths of the full crop.

It will be seen from the Resolution of the Central Provinces Administration (12th February 1896) that during 1895-96 the District Board spent Rs. 64,000 (on able-bodied labourers, say 5 annas per head against the actual pressure on nearly 2 lacs of men who depend on labour for support), and it is therein said that the monsoon rains gave sufficient employment to the labouring classes (meaning thereby that they were employed by the agriculturists themselves reduced to privation and wanting seed grain for sowing), but the Chief Commissioner admits that "it appears certain that these classes had to endure much privation." Privation here means want of food or famine. That is all that was done during the year, but no village relief works were undertaken as contemplated, see Sections 6 and 16. Those people that had the strength to travel long distances for work leaving the sick at home got certain measure of relief; small wonder then that the rate of mortality went up by leaps and bounds. Sir Charles Lyall took charge in December 1895. The outturn of kharif then had again failed, being only 5 annas. It was decided to open poor-houses in Jabalpur and Murwara towns. In the table given it is shewn that on the average 4,000 men monthly were employed (by District Board) from May to October in roads and tanks and less than that number were employed in Railway (Saugor-Katni). Poor-houses in towns relieved 1,500 souls. On an average, say 10,000 men were thus worked and paid, out of nearly two lacs affected by the want of food. The total expenditure of the District Board and the provincial grant in the year was Rs. 64,000 + 20,000; total Rs. 84,000.

The conclusion then seems inevitable, that the very beneficent provisions of the Famine Code laid down by a Paternal Government in view of its past experience was misunderstood. The landlords who are the natural protectors of their tenants should have been freely consulted as in North-West. Unwillingness to admit the existence of a famine is natural while the means at the disposal of the heads of administrations of correctly ascertaining the distress of the people is very limited. The association I represent was not then in existence, nor was there any other public body to represent facts correctly to the Government. In several districts the Deputy Commissioners were new men while the tahsildars were not going to confess that they cannot recover the Government dues and thus acknowledge their inability. In Jabalpur there are 2,600 mahals owned by, say, 1,700 or 1,800 proprietors, there were 1,400 attachments, issued for Land Revenue in 1895 and 1,100 in 1896, in both of which parts of the Revenue kists were suspended or remitted, that is to say, that the Revenue Officers did not apply to the Chief Commissioner for suspension or remission, until they actually failed in spite of coercive processes to recover the demands. One is not disposed to place any value on a favour which is shown as a matter of course.

Experience of high mortality has now shown that one dry year causes havoc with the indigent and improvident agriculturists who are made to pay 16 annas land assessment on 11 annas produce from 12 annas of land under crops. It should be admitted that agriculture is thus a "gambling in rain," and that no time should be lost before the Famine Code is put into full operation. On the other hand if the words famine and distress are not very liberally defined, the assessments ought to be reduced to natural levels, that is, unless irrigation is supplied, the assessments ought to be made in proportion to actual cultivation and average productions. This argument is supported by the consideration of the question of food grain supply, which had in the past been so deficient that a failure of one crop is the beginning of *distress*, if not of a *famine*, and that the bulk of the people live upon small grains, such as kodo, kutki, etc., which give very little nutrition to body and thus render them liable to epidemics, deaths from which must be included in all mortality calculations of a famine. In the Jabalpur poor-house the beggars were admitted in such a low condition of

‡ Not printed.

health that in spite of treatment and medical diet 10 to 16 per cent. died. Villagers admitted to Jail when given ordinary diet, fell sick or died. When once a man leaves his village and relatives in despair and wanders about and picks up and eats any food he gets, his case becomes hopeless. After three months of unusual food, no doctor can save a beggar's life. At an average there are about 160 lacs of acres under food crop and about 25 lacs under oil seeds in the whole of the Central Provinces.

In Jubbulpore the average area under crops is as follows:—

In wheat and gram . .	4½ lacs of acres.
In rice, jowary kodo and kutki	3½ lacs—8 lacs of acres.
(Non-nutritious food) rice area being about . .	1½ lacs.
In oil seeds . . .	1 lac.
Miscellaneous . . .	1 „

Note.—Total 10 lacs, including 2¼ lacs of acres in the occupation of proprietors 22,000 in number; they are also agriculturists but form such a small portion of the total population of 7 lacs that they need not be separately accounted for. The population of this district in the last Census was over 6½ lacs of souls. Add 7 per cent. for the increase during the last 6 years, setting off the emigration from Native States against the abnormal death rates of the past. Approximate total 7 lacs divided thus:—

(*a*) Agriculturists . .	2⅔ lacs including 22,000 proprietors themselves occupying 25 per cent. of land in holdings and following agriculture.
(*b*) Agricultural labourers .	1⅓ lacs.
(*c*) Other occupationists requiring to be supported by (*a*) and (*b*).	
(*d*) Petty servants . .	1 lac.
(*e*) Others in town . .	1 lac.

Note.—Actual figures is 748,000 or 7½ lacs.

My estimate is that the acute distress affected over two lacs of men and another lac suffered also from want of sufficient food.

If to each family (of four persons) 4 lbs. food-grain is allowed, the allowance will be poorer by 20 per cent. as compared to the Famine Code ration scale (Sections 81 and 82). I will therefore adopt a medium of 4⅓ pounds per day:—

Famine Code.

	lb.	oz.
Men	1	14
Women	1	10
One child		15
One child		7
	4	14

Or 1 lb. and 14 ozs. of clean flour or rice or 5lbs. of grain. I have allowed 4⅓ lbs. of seed grain $4\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{360}{4} = \frac{9}{2} \times \frac{90}{1} = 405$ lbs, in a year per head or say 5 maunds.

The population of 7 lacs then require 35 lacs of maunds of food-grain (wheat, partly grain and rice) or correctly 37½ lacs for 7½ lacs of souls.

(At the famine scale add one tenth more or 3½ lacs more). Total 41 lacs. I have left out ½ a lac of souls supported by mother's milk or are sick, from these figures. I have adopted 35 lacs as the basis of calculation.

Now according to Agricultural Statistics there are 2 lacs of head of agricultural cattle, most of them being found in fully cultivated Havelli, which produce 72 per cent. rabi crops. What the welfare of the industry requires is, they should be kept as strong as cart-bullocks, and allowed one seer gram a day. This will require a large quantity. Let us give them grain for three months (the working months) or one-fourth. Two lacs seers equal to 5,000 maunds in day or 1½ lac maunds in a month or 4½ maunds in a quarter year. We allow nothing for as many heads of other cattle.

Total consumption then comes to (35 + 4⅓) say, 40 lacs of maunds at the medium rate of rations. If you allowing nothing for cattle, but adopt the Famine Code rations, you arrive at the same figure. Now staple food-grain is grown on 6½ lacs of acres and small seeds on 2 lacs. The production of an average all round 12-anna year at 5½ maunds per acre is 36 lacs of maunds. At this rate a full year will give 8 maunds or 600 lbs. on all descriptions of soil which is indeed higher than what has been made out by Government crop experiments. However that, at this calculation, we get no more than 36 lacs of maunds from which the seed grain to be kept back for the next year, and the grain payments for labour to (*b*) and (*c*) classes are to be deducted. In settlement calculations one-third is deducted for the cost of cultivation, *viz.*, 12 lacs. This leaves 24 lacs of maunds of wheat, grain and rice. Make it 30, if you like, still the quantity required for nutritious food of men require 35 lacs or 40 lacs for the total consumption. This account shews that (40 — 24) = 16 lacs of maunds of non-nutritious. Small seeds are used by the people (7 lacs of souls) in a 12-anna year. Further, these small seeds are not sold in the bazar in ordinary times.

Again, take the total of all kinds of food-grain produce, and see if there has been any want of food in the years previous:—

Staple food on 6½ lacs of acres .	= 36 lacs of maunds.
Small seed on 2 lacs . . .	= 14 lacs (husked).
Total . . .	50 lacs.

From these fifty lacs deduct 16 lacs for seed and cost. There is thus a balance of 34 lacs of maunds against an expenditure of 40 lacs, including the consumption by cattle and according to my calculations. Excluding them, but giving to the men full rations (famine), 38⅓ lacs of maunds, the plus, minus, square themselves. Note, however, that out of 35 lacs of maunds of food-grain, nearly half is small grain, people eat which only in cases of privation or want. I may here say at once that the oil seeds and miscellaneous crops grown on two lacs of acres is the only wealth of the district.

Let us see how the finances of the agriculturists stand in order to see whether the heavy enhancements have not made them suffer more in the past, obliging them to sell off their grain, stock, cattle and metals during the years 1894-95 and 1895-96. I have shewn further that the new assessment of 1893-94 compelled the people to sell staple food-grain and to live upon small seeds grown by them which they do not sell.

Total produce 50 lacs maund grain, expenditure 16 lacs, net available balance is 34 lacs on 10 lacs of acres. But the tenants occupy only three-fourths of area. The balance of grain in their hand is thus $\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{34}{4} = \frac{102}{4} = 25$ lacs.

These agriculturists number nearly 3 lacs of men requiring 16 lacs of maunds of food-grain (at full ration). There is thus a saleable balance of 9 lacs of maunds, of which the value at 16 seers to the rupee would be about 25 lacs of rupees more or less or Rs. 30 lacs at Famine rate. In view, however, of the fact that small grains were not sold and that the expenditure is more than the above figure income, I am certain that they sold out a large quantity of food-grain and used up the small seeds and miscellaneous produces for food and thereby reduced their constitution.

The district has also the oil seed and cotton grown on one lac of acres, the outturn of which is, say, 6 or 7 lacs of maunds (clean) valued at, say, 20 lacs. Add another 10 lacs for miscellaneous crops. Total 30 lacs or Rs. 15 per acre or after deducting expenses of cattle ration Rs. 20 lacs; the tenants' share thereof is 15 lacs of rupees. This is also an extreme calculation. I would from experience say that the income of an acre never exceeds Rs. 10 for best wheat cultivation. I would reduce this income to ten lacs of rupees. The tenants' total income then is 40 to 45 lacs or an average of Rs. 43 lacs or about Rs. 16 per head (the number of agriculturists being 2⅔ lacs and not 3 lacs).

If you give them an allowance of one rupee a month for clothing, other necessary food, cattle, medicines, feeding dependants, payment of interest on current loans, and finally for their contribution to the miscellaneous revenue of the Administration (amounting to nearly 5 or 6 lacs in the District), you will be only keeping them above the day labourers and perhaps even not that: this allowance may be called his "living wages." The expenditure comes to Rs. 4 monthly per family of four. This allowance (3 lacs × 12) absorbs 36 lacs of rupees, or say even thirty lacs, leaving a balance of Rs. 7 to 13 lacs for payment of rent-and Kotwars', Patwaris' and Muccadums' dues, etc. But the last rent assessment on tenants is 13½ lacs of rupees !!!.

Tenants get in a 12-anna year mixed food (good and bad) and less than one rupee a month as a calculation which is

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extremely disadvantageous on every point. No wonder then that the enhancements could not be met from ordinary resources, but led to their selling off the seed and cattle before the actual famine commenced.

It is true that in 1895 Rs. three lacs were remitted and in 1896 two lacs, but these years were 8 and 9 annas. Instead of having 13 lacs of rupees in their hand, they had not then 13 thousands to pay their rents. In a 12-anna year the income was 40 lacs, therefore in a 8-anna year the income will be less than 30 lacs against an urgent expenditure of the same amount. I say urgent, because as a matter of fact he first spends this allowance before he thinks of paying the rent. If the rent is first paid, then his debts accumulate. Finally no one should forget that the generality of agriculturists are indebted, in fact heavily so, and have got to pay a portion of the same in cash or grain every year.

The rent and revenue assessments have been enhanced 70 per cent. compared to those of the former settlement. Before the new settlement the landlords used to assess rents, and if they were high, although they let them remain recorded, but in generality of cases did not sue or otherwise enforce the payment thereof. In private estates the yearly average arrears are over 22 per cent., while in the estates managed by the Government or Court of Wards, the average is certainly over 12 per cent.

All Malguzars advanced grain and otherwise help the cultivation. In 1896, this became impossible, now the law will help them to recover the full assessed rent. In this state of things was the distress or famine of 1896-97 ushered in the Provinces. The landlords have themselves become poor and indebted, while according to the new laws of giving protection to raiyats, it is intended to make them independent of the landlords. At any rate, a feeling of hostility had been created between the two classes, and the "poorest was going to the wall." By the heavy revenue assessment, the landlords themselves had become practically incapable to protect their tenants: their average profit per mahal is about Rs. 300 only.

The Government is now face to face with the agriculturists, and it has become responsible to keep them on the land. The very first warning of an agricultural distress should not be neglected. No Government can find all the capital required for cultivation by the tenants, who again are afraid of borrowing from the Government as its methods of arrear collection are summary.

Finally, it was expected that the money spent on relief will be confined to the improvement of lands and of agriculture. The lacs spent on making kuchha village roads seem to have been misspent, as these roads will make communication more difficult in wet seasons: a heap of loose black earth without consolidation or metalling add to the difficulties of the traveller. Excavation of tanks is similarly useless in the District as there will not be sufficient water in these in dry seasons for the purpose of irrigation. Sinking wells and bunding fields should have been the only work taken in hand, and such works will have also kept the villagers in their own village as is contemplated by the sections of the Famine Code I have cited. If this had been done in 1895, the deficiency of the late monsoon of 1896 would have had less injurious effect and perhaps the famine might not have been so severe.

In conclusion, I also suggest that had huts been erected at the large gang works, less people would have died from exposure during the cold weather rains. It was indeed a pitiable sight to see half dead men lying exposed to severe cold and rain falling on them. In some places these people died from hail storm.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO THE COMMISSION'S QUESTIONS.

*1. In Jabalpur district nearly 5½ lacs of souls were more or less affected, of whom the agriculturists and their dependants suffered the most—

	Lacs.
(*a*) Agriculturists (including proprietors of land who cultivate land), number	2¾
(*b*) Agricultural labourers, number	1½
(*c*) Other occupationists depending on the above for support and living in the village	1
	5
(*d*) Town population whose income is less than Rs. 15 monthly	½
(*e*) Not affected	2
Total	7½

Classes (*b*) and (*c*) are paid by *grain* by the class (*a*); none of these classes purchase grain. My estimate of the population who purchase food-grain and were affected is less than one lac of souls.

2. To reply to this question I am obliged to divide the subject into parts (*a*), (*b*) and (*c*)—

(*a*) The producers of the food grain were affected because of the partial failure of rain in 1895 and 1896 but had nothing to do with the high prices prevailing because their only wealth is grain; if it is produced they sell it but never buy it; if, on the other hand, it is not produced, they have no money to buy grain but suffer from the want of food. The remark applies to the (*b*) class and to the majority of the (*c*) class. The high prices affect only the D class or nearly one lac of souls. According to the peculiar law of the Province the tenant has no credit with a money-lender; he can only borrow from his landlord if he has any grain or money to lend, but he had nothing to lend in 1895-96.

(*b*) The classes (*a*), (*b*) and (*c*) were similarly affected in the years 1894 and 1895, not because the rains failed but because the "late monsoon" was abundant and the moisture in the soil generated rust and other diseases of the winter crops of food grain. The prices rose from 16 seers to the rupee to 12 seers. This period was not recognized as a famine year for the agriculturists, although the average production of food grain was half.

(*c*) As the distress was mostly due to the failure of the harvests in the year 1896-97, so the distress of the year previous was due exclusively to the loss of the "staying power of the agriculturists" for it does not stand to reason that the tenantry fell victim to the distress merely because of a few inches of excess of rain in one year.

3. I have taken an average of the last nine years and say that the normal outturn of the district of food grain had been 11 annas, and not more, to 16 annas the full crop, and the average of "late monsoon" is less than 10 inches during the said nine years. It is on this monsoon (September to November) that both the wet crops and the winter crops depend. But in—

1893-94	late monsoon was	22	inches.	Outturn of food grain	10 annas.
1894-95	,,	17	,,	,,	9 ,,
1895-96	,,	1¼	,,	,,	8 ,,

But—

1888-89	,,	2¼	,,	,,	13 ,,
1885-86	,,	4¼	,,	,,	9 ,,

It is then impossible to deduce any fixed proportion between the rainfall and the outturn which depends on many causes besides the monsoon. In the year 1895-96 over 4½ lacs of acres were not at all sown, while in the year previous over 3 lacs of acres were not under crop.

(*b*) Up to the time the people had any hopes of the (kharif) wet crops of 1896, the prices were about 12 seers to the rupee against 16 seers the normal rate; it was, however, during this period that the famine was born in the district because the classes I have referred to as affected had no money to buy. Altogether it was a fine of money and not of grain until the prices rose up to 9 seers to the rupee in the year 1897.

4. The preceding seasons were on the average good, but by incessant cultivation of the same grain on the same soil and because the agriculturists did not follow, because they were not taught, the most rudimentary principles of agriculture, the soil lost its productive power and the outturn was during the last ten years only an average of 12 annas, just sufficient to feed the district without any export. But because the agriculturists were capitalless and in debt and the land-taxes were enhanced in 1893-94 by 70 per cent., they sold out their seed grain and food for the family and thus suffered severity. I have given the details of figures in my General Statement.

5. Under normal circumstances as evidenced by the figures of the outturn and land-tax assessments, the agriculturists who form the backbone of the district population do not enjoy a fair measure of well-being, but have become utterly ruined. The agricultural labourers and other dependents of the agriculturists who are paid by grain in proportion to the produce are always in an unsatisfactory state, specially

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

when the outturn is less than 11 annas to the rupee (16 annas.)

6. The agriculture of the district is dependent on timely rain but much more on the system of agriculture that is or ought to be followed in the absence of irrigation and capital for the industry. If the soil is not well turned up by deep ploughing sufficient moisture for the staple food (wheat) cultivation is not retained after a season of short "late monsoon," while if drains are not cut in or near the fields excessive rain generates diseases to the crops, specially in rich black cotton soil, as was the case in 1894-95. The agriculturists here do not do either of these two. Further they sow the cheapest therefore the weakest grain seed, which is very liable to the attack of all sorts of diseases and can bear neither dryness nor the moisture. In the present state of facts agriculture in Central Provinces is a speculation in rain.

7. That part of the population I am dealing with, *viz.*, the agriculturists, had in the year 1896-97 absolutely no reserve of food grain or money. I am writing of the average agriculturists who form the majority. In my General Statement I have shown that in an average 12-anna year, they are obliged to sell off their food grain or even seed grain to pay the land-taxes and to meet their urgent expenses, such as clothing and interest on capital borrowed.

The said twelve-anna year ceased in 1892-93 when the outturn was only 11 annas. Then a new settlement of rent and revenue was announced in 1893-94 raising the revenue 70 per cent. The wheat crop yielded in that year only 4 annas. It is at this period that the troubles of the people commenced. The proprietors who had to pay the heavy assessment suddenly got confused and failed to take care of their tenants. The tenants in their turn began to sell first their food grain, and their seed grain next. It is very well known that when an agriculturist has got to do this he asks for fancy prices for his little stock of grain. I am of course talking of the ordinary proprietors and raiyats who are the majority of 90 per cent. of their class. While no more than in an average 10 lacs of acres were under crop, the assessment was made on over 13½ lacs of acres, and on the assumption of a 16-anna crop, while the district never yielded more than a 12-anna crop in an average during the last nine or ten years. It was wrongly presumed in the teeth of the facts that an agriculturist is a prudent man, and that he can pay the rent during a bad year from the savings of a previous good year.

The grain reserves if any were thus exhausted in the new settlement year 1893-94 or the latest in 1894-95. The year 1895-96 was then a year of extreme distress, but no notice was taken of the agriculturists. True some new roads were made at the cost of the District Board, but that only helped the labourers and not the agriculturists.

8. I say that the famine of 1897 was deeper than any I have read of. For example, the death-rate of the great Madras Famine was not higher than 120 per mille and was due to two failures of crops, but the Jabalpur Famine exhibited a higher death rate early in 1897. The death rate was over 150 per mensem, because the famine was more than 18 months old when it was taken in hand and the people had lost their staying power three years before that year.

9. I admit that the extent of crop failure was not under-estimated in the official reports, but had not the depth of the distress been under-estimated as well and had the officers known the absence of the resources of the people correctly, they would have put the provisions of the Central Provinces Famine Code into operation in June 1895.

I and my Association do not believe that the officers or Local Government did intentionally neglect to study the facts. But had the rules of the Code contained in sections 5 and 6, Clause II (*c*), and also in section 16 been complied with in June 1895 or even in January 1896, when the present Chief Commissioner took charge, and had operations for the improvement of agriculture in villages been undertaken, the crops of 1896-97 would have been better and the mortality less.

I have given full explanations for this opinion in my General Statement.

The best proof of the under-estimate is that they did hardly anything for the agriculturists in the year 1895-96. It is true that some Revenue was suspended or remitted, amounting nearly to 5 lacs of rupees, but not until every attempt to recover the same failed. In 1895, 1,400 attachments were issued against 1,700 or 1,800 proprietors, and in 1896 1,000 coercive processes were issued. Revenue recovered in this way proves only the abject poverty of the persons taxed or that the taxes are abnormal, or at any rate that the suspension was not voluntary. If you claim rent for land a man does not cultivate and occupy or for a produce three-fourths of which is not grown, the demand is unnatural. But that is exactly what was being done in Central Provinces (Northern Districts) during the three years before the famine of 1897.

31. The above reply covers this question.

32. The net result of the famine is that some portion of the agricultural labourers and very poor tenants (who went to work on the large relief-centres) did return to their villages, but the agriculturists as a body have derived little or no benefit from the kaccha roads made (which will be impassable in wet seasons) and from the tanks dug, which can never be used for irrigation purposes excepting for very low fields.

The money spent will not yield a 10 per cent. advantage to the district. The agriculturists will not improve until an Act making it impossible for the creditors to recover their demands be passed. They will be utterly ruined if the suspensions of revenue and rent are recovered. If the suspended revenue is recovered, the rents will be similarly recovered by the proprietors. The true remedy lies in a general reduction of land-taxes to the level of average outturn and actual cultivation.

33. The only serious defect I find in the present Famine Code is that it does not define a distress or a famine. For want of this definition the distress of 1894-95 and 1895-96 was wholly ignored. There is an indication in Sections 5 and 16 as to what the District Officers have got to do in case the prices of food-grain rise 20 per cent. or a failure of crop declares itself, but it is nowhere definitely laid down that these officers must put the Code into force under certain specified circumstances. In my General Statement I have pointed out that the failure of one rabi crop (that is, if it is less than 8 annas) is the beginning of a severe distress if not of a famine. I hope this rule will be embodied in the new Code.

45 and 47. Are answered in my General Statement.

57 and 62. My experience as the Secretary of the District Board enables me to say that road operations in the Haveli (open tracts) were a waste of money. The soil is "rock disintegration" and so loose that it is almost impossible to make a pucca (metalled) road, while the kacha road is a source of trouble to the villagers. If carts or cattle pass over them during the monsoon, they become so cut up that in winter men cannot walk over them. It has again got to be repaired wholesale in the open weather or abandoned.

As regards the village tanks, if they do not dry up in the cold weather its water level becomes so low, that water cannot be drained from it for use in the winter crops; of course in the monsoon irrigation is not wanted.

Wells in fields should have been the work undertaken and that would have been a village relief and kept down mortality. My Association submitted this fact to the Local Administration and pointed out the danger of collecting large crowds of starving beggars in relief centres of works. As a matter of fact cholera broke out in several gangs which had to be dispersed.

199 and 206. During the year 1895-96 no advances under the Land Improvement Act were made, but Rs. 44,000 were lent to agriculturists and this did some good. But it is to be remembered that this loan can under the Act be only given to a few. As far as I know the raiyats, they prefer to borrow instead of going to relief works as labourers. They are, however, very unwilling to borrow from the Government. They believe that the Government method of recovery is very summary. I submit that more advantage in future ought to be given for borrowing under the Land Improvement Act. Its operations are now confined to occupancy tenants, but the most destitute of their class are the ordinary tenants. They are new to their fields and require to improve them; they also require some capital. As they cannot borrow from the Government and have no credit with money-lenders, they are obliged to take advances from the landlords. But on account of the heavy assessments and the late distress the ordinary proprietors themselves have now become ruined. Such malguzars are now willing to give security for their tenants if Government will lend through them money for the improvement of holdings. In Central Provinces ordinary tenants cannot be ousted and have an interest in land.

Further, the present condition of the soil requires respite and treatment for some years, otherwise the average production will not improve in future.

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I understand that it is impossible for the Government to be the Banker of all the agriculturists; it is therefore necessary that the malguzars should be kept in a condition able to help their tenantry. Proprietors should be maintained as a "Buffer State" between the Government and the capitalless tenantry.

207 to 215. About Rs. 7 lacs of revenue was suspended or remitted on condition that the landlords will not collect the rents from their tenants. The Local Government has no power to remit revenue according to the present law. I prefer that the authorities having local knowledge shall have this power instead of the Government of India; a change in law is necessary. I submit that revenue suspended ought not to be recovered before three years after the famine is over, in order to enable the agriculturists to reserve a stock of grain or some money. The arrears will then be more easily recovered by attachment instead of by arrest as is being done now.

I understand that the law on the subject of remissions is being recast, and that the Government has kindly decided to remit the bulk of the suspended revenue. But then if we take into consideration the suddenness and the pressure of the enhancement seems sufficient in this district.

242 and 243. If village to village relief had been taken in hand in 1895-96 instead of 1897, influx of starving beggars from the neighbouring Native States and high mortality would have been avoided, or if rest-houses or sheds had been provided for the wandering beggars, the poor-houses in the towns would have been much relieved. No care of the poor was taken in the Native States until very late. I will therefore submit that the duties of a Commissioner as provided in the Famine Code ought to be cast on the Political Agents. There is absolutely no reason why the British Districts should suffer (as did Jabalpur) for the Native States.

(*President.*)—You are a *Vakil* and member of the Landholders' Association of Jabalpur?—Yes.

Are you a native of Jabalpur?—I have been here for 23 years.

What is your opinion as to the cause of this famine?—Well, the immediate cause of the famine was the failure of the rains of 1896. There was more in 1895 than was necessary, and owing to both causes there was famine in the district. I think a further reason for this famine is that the people had lost their staying power and become poor. I don't think the failure of one year's harvest would have made the distress so severe.

You say that there were failures in 1894, 1895 and 1896?—Yes.

Apart from the failure of the crops how have they become so poor?—I have taken the figures for last 9 years, and it appears to me that the scale of production was gradually going down. I am disposed to think that on the top of a series of bad years a very heavy assessment was made, and this accelerated the distress.

Do you speak for the Association you represent in saying this?—Yes, I am specially delegated to make this point clear.

To come to relief works have you any criticism to make upon them, the time they were begun or the way in which they were managed?—Looking at Sections 5, 6 and 16 of the Famine Code I submit that those provisions had been clearly infringed between June 1895 and January 1896. The relief operations were commenced 18 months later.

Have you anything to say about relief works as to their management?—I think that if relief operations had been timely commenced and confined to the vicinity of villages as required by the sections of the Code, and if gratuitous relief were commenced in time the mortality would have been less. Then I have always objected to gang labour. My Association represented to the Chief Commissioner that work in large gangs is dangerous, and I think great mortality is owing to crowding people together. I think further that if villagers are obliged to leave their homes they do not return to them often. I have been Secretary of the District Board and I can say from experience that making kutcha roads is a pure waste of money. You cannot make a useful kutcha road. I think kutcha roads are impassable in the wet season. I think metal-breaking and collection were a very hard work for people who had been starving for 18 months. I think there should have been a regular programme as to metal collection. I think also tank irrigation is impossible in this district. A tank is really not wanted in the monsoons.

If you have no tanks and no roads what else would you have?—Wells and the bunding of fields for irrigation. I have one more observation to make. I submit that these relief works have done very well as an agency for saving life, but too much has been done. More people have been supported than was necessary. I think the only people who required relief are agricultural labourers, and I think that labourers have been more freely admitted than was necessary. Any one from the towns who went to the works got work. I think public money might have been saved better.

What works did you see yourself?—I saw road-making in this district near Jabalpur and tank digging on the Marble Rock Road. I observed that people were not housed, and when rain fell they got sick. There were no huts made for them in winter. It was not expected that there would be rain in the winter, but still some precautions against exposure should have been taken. Mr. Goodridge, Divisional Judge, said that nearly 30 men were killed in Hatta in a hailstorm owing to want of hutting accommodation. On account of the delay arrangements had to be made on a very large scale and the services of untrained hands to be engaged. I find that money has been misappropriated in the most shameless manner and there was very little or no check.

Who were the people who misappropriated the money?—Patwaris, Naib Tehsildars and Public Works subordinate officials. When cholera broke out that was the time they robbed money.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Don't you think the owners of the soil might be asked to refund a part of the money spent on village improvements?—I think they would have been happy to do it provided the work was entrusted to them and confined to their lands.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—Could not tanks be made in the rice-growing part?—Tanks are not wanted there. The rains are sufficient. They might do some good if the September rain failed.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—Do you think it is any good to irrigate wheat from wells?—Yes. It is done in other Provinces.

Is it done in this Province?—I submit it should be done and the ryots induced to do it. Wells should have been dug during the famine operations.

(*President.*)—You did no work in connection with the famine relief?—No.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Do you think malguzars will be glad to refund a portion of the money spent on village improvement?—Yes, provided they get the work to do and the work is done according to their wants.

Why did they not take loans under the Land Improvements Act?—I think they did. In 1895-96 they took ₹44,000.

At the Commissioner's Court, Jabalpur.

THIRTY-SIXTH DAY.

Thursday, the 17th March 1898.

PRESENT:

SIR J. B. LYALL, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I., (PRESIDENT).

SURGEON-COLONEL J. RICHARDSON.
MR. T. W. HOLDERNESS, C.S.I.
MR. T. HIGHAM, C.I.E.

RAI BAHADUR B. K. BOSE, C.I.E.
MR. J. B. FULLER, C.I.E., *(Temporary Member for the Central Provinces.)*

MR. H. J. MCINTOSH, *Secretary.*

The REV. MR. J. O. DENNING, American Methodist Episcopal Mission, Narsinghpur, called in and examined.

Rev. Mr. J. O. Denning.

17th Mar. 1898.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

The Commissioner of the Nerbudda Division has asked me to send you my opinion in regard to the measures used by Government for relief of suffering during the recent famine; and also asks for any suggestions I may desire to make in regard to relief in any future famine.

I have but little time to reply, as the Commissioner asks me to write you at once.

I fully understand the extreme difficulties met with in administering relief. Not to overdo, not to underdo, are two points to be kept in view. The people themselves are ever ready to impose on benevolence; to secure the faithful execution of the system inaugurated, and the honest administration of the funds by subordinate officers is next to impossible with the grade of character available for this purpose. Considering these difficulties, I think the relief given by the Government during the recent famine highly commendable on the whole. My knowledge is especially of Narsinghpur District and to some extent of Jabalpur and Hoshangabad.

The poor-houses of Narsinghpur District were well planned, ample and the sanitation as good as circumstances would permit, even much better than the same people enjoyed in their own mohallas before the famine began. The diet was sufficient and suited to the classes of people in the poor-houses.

A fair degree of diligence was displayed in gathering up the worst cases of suffering in the district and putting them into poor-houses. There were some people that preferred death to the poor-house; but this was not due to any fault of the poor-house, but to caste prejudices. Government should not, I think, ever consent to admit caste distinctions and customs in these places of relief.

I think the treatment of the poor by the officers in these poor-houses was, in general, kind, and I have heard but little complaint.

As to relief-works, their administration is much more difficult than that of poor-houses. Their plan was commendable and calculated to relieve suffering and sustain life during the crisis of the famine. Life on these works at best cannot but be miserable, especially during the rains and the cold season. But too much comfort would lead to abuse of the purpose of the works. I heard many complaints of the dishonesty of the under-officers of these works. These complaints came largely from those that were lazy, but were compelled to work. But some of the complaints were doubtless true, as I have learned from thorough inquiry.

As to the economy of the poor-houses and relief-works, I am not prepared to say, as the facts are not before me. The system itself is economic if properly administered.

I am not prepared to state an opinion on village-relief and village kitchens.

The criticisms I might make, are :—

1st.—Relief should have been begun six months earlier, at the very beginning of the rains of 1896. The suffering between June 1st and December 1st of that year is indescribable. The death-rate was very high. In my opinion not half the deaths were ever recorded. Famine is liable to occur any time, and I think Government should be ready to begin relief before so great mortality can occur.

2nd.—The relief-work should be used to better profit. In one place roads were graded and in another place acres of stone were broken; but the stone too frequently will never get to the road. The stone is useless, and the road soon washes down. When roads can be graded and paved too, the work is profitable. I would suggest that dyking of fields, clearing out of land that might be made productive, building of wells and dams in streams for irrigation purposes would be more beneficial.

I would like to call attention to what I think is a fact that with more attention to agriculture India might be able to produce at least one-third more than at present. The methods of farming are exceedingly poor and slovenly. The land is not properly tilled. Then, too, there is very much waste land. So many plots are idle. So much waste lands between fields. Government should add these on to adjoining fields and require the farmers to cultivate and plant them. The methods of cultivation, ploughing, sowing, etc., could be much improved if Government would earnestly take it in hand. A cheap but much better grade of plough could be introduced. For this purpose a model farm in one part of the Provinces which $\frac{999}{1000}$ of the people never see is not sufficient. A system should be worked in each zila through a Superintendent of Agriculture for the Provinces, a Deputy for the zila, the inspectors for the circles, and the patwaris for the minor divisions. I have not time or space to further outline my plan. But by this means much more grain could be produced and much more exported from the country. When scarcity occurs, prices rise, for home consumption, to a limited degree sufficient to shut off export and turn all to home use. But there would probably be enough grain in the country to prevent the prices rising to anything like the abnormal degree that they reached last year.

I am very desirous of seeing a better system of farming in India. I have ordered a few implements for agricultural purposes and intend trying to influence a few farmers, at least, to adopt better methods.

I should be very glad to assist in any way I can to improve the productive power of India.

(*President.*)—Your Mission is situated at Narsinghpur?—Yes. I have also work at Gadarwara.

Among what class is your work chiefly; among low class Hindus?—Our work is among all classes.

There is Gond country in Narsinghpur?—Yes, in the south part of the district in the Lakhnadon direction.

Where were the poor-houses?—At Narsinghpur, Gadarwara and Chhindwara.

Did you have frequent opportunities of seeing these poor-houses?—Yes, especially the one in Narsinghpur. There was a Local Committee of official native gentlemen, and I was made Chairman of the Committee. I used to go every day for two or three months and see the poor-house at Narsinghpur; I also saw the poor-houses at Gadarwara and Chhindwara frequently. The diet was given as directed by the Civil Surgeon. The Chief Commissioner in my presence ordered Mellin's Food to some of the weak ones.

Were there many children in the poor-house?—Yes.

Were they children of people in the poor-house itself or stray children?—Both kinds. There were also some orphans and some whose parents were scattered about or on works.

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Were the people in the poor-house confined or allowed out?—They were kept in, but not very strictly. If they wanted to run away they could do so without any difficulty.

You have no criticisms to make on the managing of poor-houses?—No. I have not. As far as I saw the poor-houses were well managed, especially the one at Narsinghpur. The one in Gadarwara was for a time not managed according to my idea of what should be done, but afterwards there was a change in the management, and it proved very effective.

Who were in charge of the Gadarwara and Chhindwara poor-houses?—At Chhindwara a Hospital Assistant was in charge; at Gadarwara at first there was a Mahomedan Munsiff, and afterwards I don't know the name or office of the man who came; at Narsinghpur there was a Mahratta Munsiff belonging to the katcherry.

The mortality was very high I suppose?—Yes. I might say that the poor-houses began in Narsinghpur and also in Gadarwara about the end of July 1896, by local subscription. There were 300, or nearly so, in Narsinghpur that received one meal a day; for a time there were 550 in Gadarwara. The Gadarwara one closed about October I think; the Narsinghpur poor-house continued till Government took it over. Besides the poor in these houses there were many dying under trees, and the distress was very apparent and severe.

Were these people of the district or mostly outsiders in the poor-house at that time?—The ones who suffered most at first were wanderers of the zilla, and a few from Bhopal and Saugor. The next class that suffered were those not able to do skilled labour (coolies). They came under the burden of the famine soon.

Their work ceased?—Yes.

To what do you attribute the great distress in the early part of the summer of 1896?—Distress began as early as 1895. In the winter of 1894-95 as I went about I noticed that villagers were becoming much poorer in the matter of dress and food; many were eating weed seeds. In the next cold season of 1895-6, I noticed that distress had become still more severe in the villages. I think it was about the close of the rains of 1895 that a woman came to me with three children for sale—a girl of 12 and two boys.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—What caste?—*Kori* caste, I think. About this time there was great scarcity, and orphans began to come in.

(*President.*)—Nothing was being done at that time?—Nothing.

I suppose at that time mostly inefficient labourers and beggars were suffering acutely?—Yes. I dare say there were individual cases besides.

Then the Gadarwara poor-house had closed about October?—Yes. The subscription poor-house closed before Government began.

Closed for want of funds?—Yes, the rains were closing, and the authorities not having funds closed the poor-house.

In what month did Government take over the poor-house?—About the 1st of December. Government gathered up cases that were lying about the road-side and under trees and put them into the poor-houses, and also opened relief works. From that time distress was not so apparent to the traveller.

Were any representations made in 1895 or the beginning of 1896, of the necessity of relief?—No; no formal representations that I know of. I had frequent conversations with the Deputy Commissioner about the condition of affairs, and he was cognizant of it.

What did you gather was the view held by the Deputy Commissioner or other officers?—I think their idea was that there was still some hope that the kharif crops of 1896 would be a success; that no formal relief works by Government need be opened. It seemed to be the impression that so large a machinery would have to be set in motion that it should not be done unless absolutely necessary.

As regards these private operations in the way of poor-houses, where did the movement come from? Was that started by your local officers or by people independently?—It was started by a number of local officers, not as officers but as individuals. If I remember rightly the first definite project for poor-houses was started by a Mahratta man. I returned from my vacation on the 12th July. I found that relief operations had been talked about already. I had little to do in inaugurating the movement.

You say Government should not ever consent to admit caste distinctions in poor-houses. Is that not rather a dangerous doctrine?—I have not recognised the danger so far.

Might it not keep a number of people out?—It might.

You say you heard many complaints of the dishonesty of the under-officers of the works?—These complaints came largely from those that were lazy but were compelled to work, but some of the complaints were doubtless true.

Do you think these sort of true cases are such as are almost inevitable, or any which could be prevented by better management?—I think the higher officers did the best they could. I have the highest praise for the work of the higher officers of Government, but with the material they had to deal with in the shape of under-officers they could not well do better. The character of under-officers is not very reliable.

Can you give one or two instances of the sort of complaints that were true?—Cases came like this. For instance, there are people who have worked for me at various times; many of them I am acquainted with as being reliable and good workers. They told me that on works they were fined one pice, two pice or an anna. I cannot think they were shirking their work. They did not know why they were fined. Where these pice went to, I have no knowledge. On my works I have had very little fining.

What kind of works had you?—Road repair for the municipality, as much as they could furnish stone for. I also built a house for my orphanage and repaired another. I dug two wells and did various other works.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—How much did you spend on these relief works, approximately?—About ₹10,000 on works, besides gratuitous relief.

(*President.*)—Did you employ anybody who came, or did you select the people?—I selected the people. I opened my relief works on the 26th March 1897 on a very small scale. On the second day I rejected 145 people that wanted to get on.

Did you take men and their wives and children or only keep the men?—Probably three-fourths of the people on my works were women.

Did you select them from the people you knew or the people you thought would be likely to be respectable workers?—There were a great many I knew nothing about. I took them on because of their need. For instance, there was a Mahomedan family consisting of a man, his wife, widowed daughter and son whom I assisted for some days with food. I wanted no more on my works. I saw they had nothing to do and they would not go to Government works for some reason. After a week or ten days I put them on to my works and they stayed for five months. Some of my workers were not able to do a third of a day's work.

Were they town or country people?—Country people.

Are there any weavers at Narsinghpur?—Yes.

Were they in bad condition?—I had a family which I have been supporting for a year or over, and there are three or four families which I have been supporting indirectly, buying clothing for the orphanage. Probably six families were supported from the Mission.

How did the weavers get on?—They were selling cloth.

Were they not generally on relief?—I think not as a class.

Were these people *Koshtis*?—There were many *Kutties* on my works. There were not many Mahomedan weavers.

Are the *Koshtis* in a tolerably good social position?—Well they are people who keep a good deal to themselves. Socially they have very little to do with others.

You say in your written note that the death-rate was very high. In your opinion not half the deaths were ever recorded. How did you come to that conclusion? Did you watch the recorded death-rate at all?—For instance, in July there were 1,200 deaths and in August 2,700, more than double what it was in the month before. This great difference would show that the records were very unreliable. Then in September they were 2,300 and in December 1,800.

Why did these figures make you think that the returns were unreliable?—From the appearance of the people I thought that these figures were not nearly up to the actual facts. From the great divergence of the figures from one month to another, it seemed to me that they could not be reliable.

You say many people were dying on the roadside?—Yes, before December 1896. After the Government took over the poor-houses and started relief works, there were very few such cases. Then the police put them into poor-houses

It is an impression only?—I have no figures for it.

You were away from the 25th March to the 12th July, the time when you think there was a great deal of mortality on the roads?—The time of the greatest mortality on roads was from July to December 1896.

What was the condition of the people on relief works in 1897 as far as you happened to see. As regards people who had been some time on relief works, did they seem to look under-fed or well fed?—I think they were fairly well fed, but they were very poorly clad. I think they suffered a great deal from lack of clothes.

Did they look as fairly well fed as people of their class do in ordinary years?—Much thinner.

Have you ever had occasion to study the sufficiency or insufficiency of the D ration allowed on public works?—Not carefully.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—I think you said you opened your relief works in March 1897?—Yes.

Why did you open them then and not earlier?—Because I had no money earlier.

On getting money you opened the works?—The very next day.

In Narsinghpur itself?—Yes.

Was there any Government work there?—Not in Narsinghpur.

How far away?—The nearest one was about 4 miles away.

What were the wages?—The same as Government was paying them, 6 pice to a woman and 2 annas to a man. When I had a man doing heavy work I paid him 10 pice a day.

Did you employ any children?—Yes.

What did you pay them?—I paid them from 4 to 5 pice a day. I paid none less.

You took on only as many children as your work required?—My work did not require any children from a business point of view. I took them because they were needy. Some were children whose parents were on work and some were children that had no parents or relatives.

Did you pay a Sunday wage?—Yes; we gave them a holiday and paid the same rates.

Did you exact from them a certain amount of work to be done?—No measured amount. I had two or three men to look over them and see they did a proper amount.

You had not to fine them?—Very rarely.

Did you succeed in getting a fair amount of work done?—A fair amount for the condition of the worker. I would judge of the condition of the men and say let this one rest or put the other to light work if necessary.

(*President.*)—Do you think the men on the work were in the same condition as those on Government work?—I think they looked much better.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—You paid 2 annas to a man and 6 pice to a woman. Could they support their children on their joint wage?—They did.

Did you give gratuitous relief to small children who were unable to do work?—No not to those whose parents were on my works, except in the way of clothes.

You expected a man and a woman to keep the children from their joint earnings?—Yes, if they had non-working children.

As a matter of fact did the same couples support non-working children in this way?—Yes.

On Government relief was piece-work substituted for task-work within your knowledge?—Yes, I saw some of that.

What was your impression of that; was it a good measure or the reverse?—I think in some cases it was a good thing, where the people were able-bodied. But in other cases it was a great hardship. For instance, I saw at one time as many as probably 20 women breaking stones by measurement. Some of them were near confinement, some were otherwise incapacitated for that kind of work. Then to depend upon the amount of work done for their food was very hard.

Were these put on piece-work?—Yes.

Did they earn less than they required for their support?—Yes.

In some cases you think it was good?—When an able-bodied person was on work and able to earn a proper living it worked very well.

The fault was rather in selection?—Yes.

Did you find out what rates were given generally?—An able-bodied man was able to make the Code rate and possibly one or two pice more if he worked hard. Weak ones could not support themselves.

Were these works under contractors?—Latterly I think under contractors.

Had the introduction of piece-work any effect in reducing numbers, can you say?—I cannot say.

Until piece-work was introduced do you think there was idleness on works?—Doubtless there was to some extent. Human nature is so constituted. I don't think there was much of that. The mates were insistent.

You say life on relief works at best cannot but be miserable, especially during the rains and the cold season. Did you see many of the works?—Yes.

What was the condition of the workers on these works?—One thing was that they were insufficiently clad, another was that they had to work in the rains more or less: being away from their homes and living in these *chuppurs* and being massed together they could not be well looked after. There is the great difficulty, that if you make the works too pleasant you would be imposed upon.

It would be very difficult in the rains to make the works pleasant, would it not?—Yes.

What form of relief should be resorted to?—I think it would be a good thing to give the people more clothes, especially as they never have a change at night in the rainy season.

Did you see anything of the gratuitous relief given through Government?—Very little.

Have you any information as to its value?—I have no special information, only that if rightly administered it ought to be a very good thing. As to how honestly it was administered I cannot say.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—Were not clothes given from the Charitable Relief Fund?—Some, but not very much compared with the need.

You had a large balance in the Mansion House Fund of the District?—They gave quite a number of blankets latterly, but very little clothing apart from this.

Besides the poor-houses at Narsinghpur and Gadarwara had not you a poor-house started from private charity at Chhindwara?—May be. I think not.

A meeting to organize your local private charity was held in July 1896. Was that presided over by the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Phillips?—I don't remember. I was away.

You had a number of orphans?—Two hundred and ten now.

Did you receive any aid for the orphans from the Charitable Relief Fund?—I have received R2,000 from the Local Committee. I have received nothing since October.

Do you need more assistance?—I do. I have no permanent means of support for them.

I believe you have got figures showing the total quantity of American grain distributed in the Central Provinces?—One thousand and two hundred tons were distributed in the Central Provinces and Berars.

(*President.*)—Can you tell us what was the lowest age of your working children to whom you paid 4 to 5 pice?—About nine years old.

Do you know whether families who were working for you on relief works had any old adult dependants incapable of work? Had they any old women attached to them?—Some had. For a long time there were sixty old women that I was supporting. I support them yet.

What had they to do out of their wages: had they to feed themselves and children under nine years of age?—Yes, the children were fed from what the father and mother got. A few of the people on works gave me their children and I kept them along with the orphans. They have returned. The parents said the children were given to me for ever, but I didn't expect they would remain with me when the famine was over.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—You said the mortality was very great in the poor-houses. Did you take any notice of the chief disease which caused this mortality?—There were some deaths from cholera.

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In what month was that?—About the beginning of the rains of 1896. The chief disease was diarrhœa and there were sores of various sorts.

Where were these sores situated?—In various parts of the body; sometimes on the foot or hand, sometimes on the limbs.

Were these sloughing sores?—Some were and some were in the shape of carbuncles or ulcers. Frequently they would increase and the people would become thinner till they died.

What medical treatment had you?—The Civil Surgeon was in charge and the Hospital Assistant attended daily.

You are not a medical man?—No.

To what did you attribute the prevalence of these diseases?—To the lack of food, to the bad quality of the food and to their eating raw food.

What kind of raw food?—Any kind of fruit or seed picked up wherever they could get it. Insufficient food was also a great cause. They seemed to be troubled with liver and could not digest their food. The Civil Surgeon and Hospital Assistant treated the children in the orphanages, and it was a long time before the children were able to digest proper food. I fed them on gruel and sago, but frequently could not bring them to the normal.

Did many of them die?—From 1st December 1896 to 1st December 1897, ninety-three died from my orphanage.

How many passed through your orphanage?—I cannot say. I suppose the number in the orphanage would average about 160. I took in many who were very near death; quite hopeless cases.

They could not digest any of their food?—No, many of the children besides had *cancrum oris*.

Did that spread among the children. Is it contagious?—I rather think it is not contagious. I tried to segregate the children as much as possible because I thought it might be.

Was there any scale of diet for the people in the poor-houses?—Before Government took them over there was a fixed scale of diet. They had one coarse meal a day. We did not expect that this would be sufficient to maintain them in anything like good condition, but they were begging about in addition to what they got from the poor-house. Later on they had a scale more or less defined for the stronger ones and those capable of digesting ordinary food, but a large proportion was diseased, one would have diarrhœa and another fever and the doctor would give them a special diet.

It was a hospital rather than a poor-house?—Yes.

And the diet was according to the prescription of the medical officer?—Yes.

What were the people living on outside about the time this poor-house was opened?—Mahua, weed seed, and wherever they could get it jowari or any seed of that kind; the low caste people were taking offal.

These seeds they took were apparently uncooked?—Largely so. Some of the Gonds killed buffaloes and ate them who were not in the habit of doing so before.

Do you think this diet was mainly the cause of sickness?—I have no doubt of it. I think comparatively few died without some sort of disease.

What caused the disease?—Scarcity and improper food, so that in my opinion it might be laid down to famine.

Were there many deaths from epidemic disease, such as cholera?—Five from my own relief workers, and in the poor-houses and among the orphans it also occurred. I think there were something like 20 in the poor-house orphanage died of cholera. They were entirely segregated and sent off half a mile or more away.

Did that have the desired effect?—Yes.

Do you think the medical attendance was adequate to meet the number of cases that the medical officer had to deal with, or was more required?—I think some more was required. Two answers might be given to that question. There should have been more men. The Hospital Assistant was very busy with hospital work; of course he had the assistance of compounders, but I think the labour was too great. Another point is that the medical skill was not equal to the diseases, as they had advanced too far when medical skill was applied.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—Was the mortality in the Narsinghpur poor-house greatest during the rains or hot weather of 1897 if you exclude cholera?—I am not able to say.

Was the genera condition of the people similar at both times or markedly worse at any one time?—In the poor-houses they were fairly well cared for in the rains, they had clothing and sheds and were not exposed to rain as the people on relief works, and as far as my memory goes the condition was not very much different in the rains from what it was in the dry weather.

You don't think that more people died during the rains than in the hot weather in the poor-houses?—My opinion would be that probably a few more died during the rains, but I cannot say definitely as I have no figures.

Was there any *cancrum oris* during the hot weather?—Yes.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Between August and October 1897 the mortality rose to between seven to ten per mille per mensem, and there was practically no cholera in the district. Were fevers unusually prevalent this autumn?—There was a great deal of it. I could hardly state an opinion.

It was an unusually unhealthy autumn, was it not?—Yes.

Did the fever invade every household generally?—I cannot say that. I suppose so.

Was it a particularly malarial type?—I think not.

The Rev. Mr. Ben Nevis Mitchell, Missionary, Christian Mission, Bina, called in and examined.

Rev. Mr. Ben Nevis Mitchell.

17th Mar. 1898.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

I am in receipt of your communication dated 15th February 1898, and in reply beg to state that it is impossible for me to give any information under—

A.—Departures from the prescriptions of the "Central Provinces Famine Code," as I am ignorant of said Code.

B.—I have been in very close contact with the famine sufferers around Bina, helping them to the best of my ability; and have no hesitation in saying that I consider the measures adopted by you have been beyond fair criticism, not only in the effort to save life, but also from the standpoint of economy.

C.—I should strongly advocate the opening of more depôts in the rural districts for sheltering and feeding children and aged and infirm people.

D.—I am of the opinion there are three things to be deeply regretted—

(1) The withdrawal of help too soon: before the people were in a position to help themselves relief was withdrawn. There is still real and acute distress in some of the villages around Bina. This distress is principally amongst the day labourers.

(2) Government demanding the taxes from the villages. While I have heard many genuine expressions of gratitude for the way Government helped them during the famine, I now hear complaints that they are compelled to pay their taxes even though they have to sell the very oxen bought with money given them by Government for the purpose.

(3) Merchants and banias are granted decrees against these people to amounts beyond the value of their crops. This is a very serious proceeding not only calculated to counteract the good impressions your help has made on the minds of the villagers, but to actually drive the people from the district. Hundreds have already left, and I fear the exodus will become a serious one unless something is done and soon.

(*President.*)—Your Mission is at Bina?—Yes.

Have you been there long?—I have been there now four years. I arrived on the 1st February 1894.

Is it a wheat country?—Yes, wheat and grain.

The crop in 1894 was bad?—Yes.

Did that cause distress, in your opinion?—Yes; there has been distress ever since we went there. I was told by the villagers that distress had been felt the year before.

Do you remember to what they ascribed it the year before?—Blight.

I suppose the distress was not very visible in the appearance of the people in 1894?—No, I did not see any great alteration in the first year.

In 1895 the harvests were pretty good?—No, bad.

When did you begin to see what you might call general signs of distress?—In 1895, after the rains it became general.

General among the labouring class?—Yes. Bina is a railway station with 175 to 200 railway employes. My main work is in the surrounding villages and among the railway people. There had been some distress at the beginning of 1895. They had had a year of scarcity the year before. We had not been there two months when people commenced bringing their children and asking us to take them.

Did you take any of these children?—Yes, when the father had died.

In the autumn of 1895 when you saw distress become general, what were the people feeding on?—The majority was eating gram, a few jowari.

Where they under-fed, in your opinion?—Yes.

Did that extend to cultivators?—Yes.

To the poorer cultivators?—Yes.

You say that you began doing what you could to help the people. When did you begin to give what you might call organized help?—I have had the misfortune to misplace my book, so it is very hard for me to answer that question. About 15 months ago, as early as the beginning of 1897, we had a system of giving them systematic help in the way of seed-grain and food, also clothing.

But in 1894, 1895, and the early part of 1896 there was no organized relief on the part of Government?—In 1896 Government opened relief works. Towards the end they made a road from Khimlasa to Etawah.

When did you begin to see signs of high death rate due to privation?—In 1896 we found in one week 38 bodies within a distance of 400 yards of our house, and I think out of 38, 36 had died during the night. Scarcely knowing what to do, I wrote to Sir John Woodburn, who was interested in our district, saying that there was great distress around us, and I asked that the statements in my letter might be verified and something done at the same time.

In what month?—September 1896.

Was there any reason to suppose that that was a solitary occurrence, or did it happen in other parts of the district?—It was the case in all parts. People were dying rapidly. They had come into the station to beg.

Do you think that these were people of your own district?—My answers are exclusively regarding our own villages. Several people came from Karwai saying that the Nawab was doing nothing to assist them.

Did this go on?—We never found so many dead bodies after that, but the people had been dying around.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Was cholera prevailing at the time?—No.

(*President.*)—Did you examine these bodies?—Some.

What do you think they died of?—Most of them from starvation, some from dysentery.

Were they chiefly adults, or children?—More adults than children.

Relief works were opened in December?—Yes.

What was the first relief work you saw in your neighbourhood?—The road from Etawah to Bina in 1894.

Were there many people on that work?—It would be very difficult for me to say how many, because the work was in operation when we went there.

When did it cease?—I doubt if it ceased till a year or 18 months ago.

Did work go on, or did it lie like that?—I think it was left until after the rains, and afterwards they put on some broken stone.

You say in your letter that you strongly advocate the opening of many depôts. Do you mean kitchens?—Yes, kitchens for the feeding of children.

Were there any kitchens near you?—One, at Etawah, but only towards the end of the distress.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—As a matter of fact, do you remember if it was opened in July 1897?—Yes, I believe so.

(*President.*)—Do you think it was much frequented?—Yes, but before that time we had ourselves been feeding children, and we had sent away a great number of orphans to orphanages;—considerably over 400.

Was that Etawah kitchen in connection with relief work? I believe so.

Do you think that all classes of people in distress would go to kitchens?—I believe they did.

When hard pressed?—Yes. We had all castes, sometimes even high caste people would bring their children. Caste was not recognised at the time.

As regards young children, before their marriage caste is not strictly recognized by the people themselves. The question is about grown-up children, whether kitchens can be relied upon as a means of getting them?—I advocate in my letter that they should be for children and aged and infirm people. We have always found these people ready to eat with the children.

You say in your letter that you think there are three things to be deeply regretted. First, the withdrawal of help too soon, before the people were in a position to help themselves; when was help withdrawn?—I think around Bina it should have been continued at least three months longer, because people had for years been suffering from bad crops and had absolutely nothing to fall back upon.

When was it actually withdrawn?—I cannot say. Village-relief went on after road-work had been stopped. We have distress round us yet.

Do you mean there are many people who cannot get sufficient food?—Yes.

Do they show it in their appearance?—Yes.

Mostly of the labouring class?—Yes. I think the opening of more depôts for the feeding of children would be a great boon to the people, and keep the children in their own neighbourhood.

Do you think children got separated from their parents on relief-works?—I think so, in many cases.

You say the second thing to be regretted is Government demanding the taxes. Land Revenue taxes, do you mean?—Yes.

The last harvest has been a good one?—In many places the present harvest of grain will only be an 8-anna one.

You say you hear people are compelled to pay their taxes, even though they have to sell the very oxen bought with money given them by Government. Do you think that is an elegant way of putting it, or has that actually happened?—That is the only plain, straightforward English that I know. Up to three months ago people would say they had great respect for Government officers and they told us the Government was most kind to them. In the villages they say we don't know why Government which was so kind to us before should be now compelling us to sell our cattle and pay our taxes.

You know if you once began to be loose about paying the tax you would have to give up realising it from those who can pay?—Yes, I am aware of that; still, when a man can barely earn a subsistence he is bound to feel it hard that the little he has is to be given up.

(*Mr Fuller.*)—You are now speaking of cultivators who came to you with complaints about paying the Land Revenue. Do you happen to know whether these people were tenants or malguzars?—Some tenants and some malguzars; 338 people sold their oxen. They don't know that I am going to make this statement.

You say the third thing is that merchants and banias are granted decrees against the people to amounts beyond the value of their crops. Do you suppose these are old debts or recent ones?—Most of them I think are old debts.

You say these things are driving people from the district: hundreds have already left, and you fear the exodus will become a serious one unless something is done and soon. What sort of people were you thinking of?—Labourers and cultivators.

Where are they going to?—The Mussalmans are going to Bhopal.

It is possible that there were so many deaths in Bhopal that there are vacancies?—I cannot understand why Mussalmans should go to Bhopal. Hindus go from Bhopal into Gwalior.

Most of the people you say have gone are farm-labourers?—Yes, day-labourers. Some of the cultivators

Rev. Mr. Ben Nevis Mitchell.

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have also gone. Some of them have sold the tiles off their houses to raise money to go with.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—When relief-works had thoroughly commenced in 1897, do you consider they were successful in their end?—I believe they were.

Did you see anything of their working?—I went to the works regularly.

What was your opinion?—I think the people should have had a little more food, and while we have the highest praise for Government officials, we were very much distressed to find the mates in some cases simply vultures. On one occasion I found the people had flour mixed with earth. The mate was found to be in league with the banias.

Was this at the commencement of things?—No, after the works had been in operation three months.

Did you report it?—Yes, and the clerk on the works had the mate dismissed.

Did you see village relief? Was it successful?—It was highly appreciated. The villagers were simply delighted to think that Government cared for them.

You say that higher wages should have been paid?—I believe so. At first they were low, and they were afterwards increased.

At what point of time?—At the beginning of 1897.

And they were raised afterwards?—About 3 months afterwards.

Was that sufficient?—It was sufficient for what Government intended it to be; just to give actual life to those who had no other means of sustenance.

Your opinion apparently is that there should have been relief to some extent in 1896?—Yes.

Throughout the year, or at the latter part of it?—Throughout.

Railway works were opened in the district?—Some distance away.

Were the relief works useful?—They drew many people away from their villages.

Still, numbers would have gone, if strong?—When the famine works were opened many were too weak to go to the Saugor-Kutni construction, and we heard that there was an epidemic, this had the effect of keeping people in their villages.

I see that road-works were opened with a view of giving relief, but not many people attended. What was the reason of that?—They said that more work was demanded of them than they could do, and that the pay was not sufficient. That was in 1896.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—What road are you speaking of?—The Kimlasa road.

Was that in the hot weather of 1896?—In the autumn of 1896.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—There were a good many immigrants from Bhopal into your part of the district?—I don't know. Most of the people working four miles away were generally from our own villages. Further away from Kimlasa, people did come from further north, over Lalitpur way.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—How many orphans had you in all from the beginning of the distress?—We sent away 400 from July 1896 to July 1897.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—You mentioned the fact of 38 bodies being found. Most of these you stated had died within the preceding 24 hours?—Yes; during the night.

Were the bodies clothed?—The majority were almost naked.

Had they anything of value on them?—No.

How were they disposed of?—The police took them away and buried them.

Were any partially, or altogether, eaten by animals?—In two cases. In one a boy's right leg had been considerably eaten by jackals, and in the other my niece saw the vultures tearing the body to pieces.

Do you think people on works were insufficiently fed?—I think so. I think that was borne out by the fact that the children were digging up roots on the road-side.

If people had come in good condition would the food have been sufficient?—Possibly that had a good deal to do with it. I think, under ordinary circumstances, a man can buy enough food for 2 annas, but food was at the time very high, and when a man was getting 2 annas, flour was 2 annas a seer. That left him nothing to buy salt, vegetables, etc., with. We had some people who said they were too weak to do work on roads, so I had some work done in the compound in order to give them something to do, and we gave 2 annas to a man, 1 anna 6 pies to a woman, and vegetables. Those who suffered most were the women and children.

Were the children much emaciated?—Yes, a number of them.

You said the flour was adulterated. How was it adulterated?—It was mixed with dirt.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—For how many months have you been distributing charity: when did you first begin?—From the very beginning. From actual observation, and by getting our native preacher to take notice, I found that the distress was terrible, and almost from the first day I was giving relief quietly.

As a matter of fact people of your villages have been looking to you for assistance for 2 or 3 years?—Only orphans and the aged.

Can you tell us what was the price of jowar after the last harvest?—I don't know.

SURGEON-CAPTAIN W. M. MITCHELL, Civil Surgeon, Narsinghpur, called in and examined.

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I put in a written statement of evidence.

A. As far as I am aware there were no departures from the principles of the Central Provinces Famine Code during the recent famine.

B. The measures adopted during the late famine, primarily with regard to the relief of distress and the saving of life, were in every respect eminently successful, as previous to the opening of the relief-works, etc., a large number of the people—especially the poorer classes—were found wandering about the towns and villages of the district begging for food under great privation and hardship, and in many instances they were suffering from disease the result of privation, and as soon as relief-works, poor-houses, etc., were opened they flocked largely to them either to earn a livelihood, or be given food and medical treatment, which relieved their distress, and saved many thousands of lives, who otherwise, I have no doubt, would have perished from starvation. In respect to economy, I am not prepared to say any thing, beyond that I saw no unnecessary waste or extravagance which would call for any special remarks from me.

C and D. In reference to these two points, it would appear to me much better in the future not to spend so much money on the construction of roads and to maintain such large poor-houses as we had here, but instead to open village relief-works, and to devote a considerable amount of the famine grants for the purchase and issue of grain through malguzars, mukaddams and patwaris, as wages to village relief-workers for village improvements, such as improving fields, making embankments for fields, digging or otherwise improving tanks and wells, etc. In doing such forms of work the people would not be obliged to go away from their villages, (an important matter), to distant relief-works, they would still remain in their villages in the comfort of their own homes, and be a less danger of importing epidemic disease such as cholera, from relief-works, which disease was in epidemic form in all the relief-works and brought into the villages by the relief-workers.

If it is possible to doubt whether village relief-workers could be effectively looked after and to receive their daily wages in grain, I think malguzars and others in charge of them would be keen to make them work, and would see that they received their grain wage properly; besides, Inspectors could be appointed to check the number of workmen employed in each village, and the proper distribution of the grain wage. There would be less temptation in misappropriating grain than in making cash payments. Besides, I think, village relief-works would be more far-reaching and less expensive than in making roads. There would, further, be no necessity in village relief-works to spend money in constructing huts—like for relief-works, hospitals, etc., and for providing for expensive establishments, such as the drinking

water arrangement, etc. If the number of workers in a village is not enough for its requirements, people could be asked to come and work daily from the surrounding villages, and return to them on completion of their day's labour. Improving village fields and embanking them would become more productive and benefit the landholders, and be a certainty of recovering the revenue regularly.

In regard to the people unfit for relief-work in the villages they might be given gratuitous village relief as was done in the recent famine; and the orphans similarly dealt with under the care of the malguzars, mukaddams, and patwaris.

By opening village relief-works in the future, the mortality I think would be lessened, and there would be fewer orphans and fewer children abandoned by their parents, as was found in several instances during the recent famine.

The poor-houses, too, would not be required to maintain so many of the starved population of the villages, and there would not be required so many huts as we had, also the establishment could be much reduced.

(*President.*)—Were you in Civil charge of Narsinghpur throughout the famine?—Yes.

Have you been in the district long?—I have been four years in the Narsinghpur District.

You say in your written note that previous to the opening of the relief works, etc., a large number of the people, especially the poorer classes, were found wandering about the towns and villages of the district begging for food under great privation and hardship. When did you begin to notice that?—From about September 1896 they began to come in. It was observable all over the district in the parts where I had been. Not only in the towns and villages.

You didn't notice that in the early part of 1896?—No, still there was distress in the early part of 1896.

How did that distress show itself?—In the dearness of food.

The distress was visible in the early part of 1896?—Prices went up and people began to feel the pinch for food. Grain was very dear and beyond their resources. They used to say that their bellies were only half full.

Was it observable in their physical condition?—Yes, especially from my observations in the jails. The admissions showed that their physique had been going down.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—You say that in many instances people were suffering from disease the result of privation. What was this disease?—Chiefly bowel complaints.

At what time?—From about September 1896 the disease began to show itself among the people.

When were relief-works opened?—In the first part of December 1896.

Then you noticed this distress two months before the relief-works were opened?—To some extent, but not to the same extent as when the relief-works were opened.

When were poor-houses opened?—About the same time. We opened two poor-houses on the 1st of December.

Were there no private measures of relief before that?—No.

No organized system?—No. Individuals had given some help in the way of small quantities of food.

What individuals?—Mahajans and merchants of the place.

Did the people come in numbers?—No, not in very great numbers.

You say as soon as relief works, poor-houses, etc., were opened, they flocked largely to them. How many inmates in the poor-houses had you at the end of December?—About 300 to 400.

And on relief works?—I don't know. Still they were pretty high too.

The diseases were chiefly bowel complaints you say?—Yes.

And to what were they due?—Want of food, and from bad nutrition.

Seeing the disease could you have reasoned decidedly as to its cause?—I should say it was simply due to indigestible and bad food and to insufficient food.

And after relief-works had been opened, was the food-supply in the poor-houses of good quality?—Yes, it was sound.

Were there any complaints?—No, I examined it.

Do you think it was sufficient in quantity?—Yes.

What ration was given?—I think it was dependent on the rates. A woman six pice, children under 12 two pice, over 12 four pice, a man 2 annas.

Do you think two pice for a child under 12 enough?—No.

In kitchens what ration did you give?—We had four classes for children. Those in the first class were children between 9 and 12 years of age, second class between 6 and 9 years, third class 3 and 6 years and fourth class under 3 years of age. They got three meals a day. I put in a statement showing the quantities given at each meal:—

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C

Kitchen ration separately given item by item.

	Men.						Women.						Children, 1st Class.						Children, 2nd Class.						Children, 3rd Class.						Children, 4th Class.					
	Morning.		Noon.		Evening.		Morning.		Noon.		Evening.		Morning.		Noon.		Evening.		Morning.		Noon.		Evening.		Morning.		Noon.		Evening.		Morning.		Noon.		Evening.	
	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.
													Age between 9 and 12 years						Age between 6 and 9 years.						Age between 3 and 6 years.						Age under 3 years.					
Rice . . .	...	4	...	6	...	...	...	3	...	6	...	...	...	2	...	5	...	...	...	2	...	3	...	...	...	2	...	3	...	...	...	1	...	1½	...	...
Flour . . .	...	...	...	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	1½
Pulse . . .	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	1½	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	½
Salt . . .	...	...	...	½	...	¼	..	...	...	½	...	¼	...	...	...	½	...	¼	...	...	...	...	...	¼	...	...	...	...	...	¼	...	...	...	...	...	¼
Oil	...	...	...	½	...	¼	...	...	...	½	...	¼	...	...	...	½	...	¼	...	...	...	...	...	¼	...	...	...	...	...	¼	...	...	...	...	...	¼
Condiments .	...	...	...	½	...	...	...	...	...	½	...	...	...	...	...	½	...	...	...	...	...	½	...	...	...	...	...	½	...	...	...	...	...	¼	...	...
Vegetables .																																				

The inmates of the kitchen were given rice conjee in the morning, rice and vegetables (lahajee) at noon, and chapatis and dal in the evening.

W. M. MITCHELL, Surgn.-Captn.,
Civil Surgeon, Narsinghpur.

Did children thrive?—Yes, they improved.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Were kitchens on relief-works or in villages?—On relief-works.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—Was there much epidemic disease?—Yes, chiefly cholera.

In what months?—I had cholera from April to September on all the relief-works.

What was that due to, do you suppose?—Probably scarcity of water was one of the causes, and to short food supply and exposure.

Was the water impure?—In some places.

The Sanitary Commissioner said that many instead of taking water from the Nerbudda stream, preferred to take it from puddles and such places?—Yes, no doubt.

What was the objection to take it from wells?—No objection at all. It was simply apathy.

Did they suffer much from exposure on relief works?—Yes, to some extent. Half the people went home in the rain in their damp clothes and returned in them in the morning.

Did these suffer more than those who stayed on works?—I think so.

Was the hutting fairly good?—Yes, and sufficient.

The huts were water-tight?—Yes.

Who selected the sites?—As a rule the Executive Engineer.

Did you see the sites?—Yes, some of them.

Do you think they were well selected?—Yes.

Did they suffer from exposure?—Yes, on cold days, and during the rains I think they suffered from insufficient clothes.

Was there much fever after the setting in of the rains?—Not very much. I think the greatest cause of death was bowel complaints. In the autumn months the worst fever went through the villages. It was very probably a sort of malarial fever.

Was it malignant?—From enquiries I heard that people died in a day or two.

Was the mortality great?—Yes, towards the end of the year.

Did you personally examine cases?—Yes.

Was there anything peculiar about the character of the fever?—No; it was malarial, I think.

Do you think it was contagious at all?—No; I particularly enquired about that.

Were there many orphans about?—Yes.

Had you charge of any?—I had charge of the orphans in Narsinghpur.

What disease did you notice was chiefly prevalent among the orphans?—The chief disease was bowel complaints, next to that a form of debility, due probably to the liver, spleen and kidneys being out of order.

Did they die much?—They died from ulceration of the mouth.

Was it contagious?—Yes.

Did you take precautions against it spreading?—Yes

Did you meet with any deaths due to starvation?—None were reported.

Did you see any dead bodies lying about?—Only when there was cholera. None were reported by the Police.

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These deaths from cholera would occur in any year?—Yes.

Did you have a free hand in providing medical comforts?—I had.

Was there any difficulty?—No, I had quite enough.

Had you any advances of money to purchase medicines and medical comforts?—Yes, I arranged with the Executive Engineer to keep the money.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—I think you said you first observed destitution in September 1896?—Yes.

In August 1896 the district mortality was 7·38, what was that due to?—I think it was due to fever.

In your opinion it was simply due to malarial fever?—Yes.

Not distress?—No.

The September death-rate was 6·47. Was that due to fever or distress?—I think fever. Privation from want of food may have helped to produce the mortality.

In October it was 7·73. By that time you had noticed distress?—Yes.

I suppose a part of this mortality was due to distress?—Yes.

Although the August mortality was not due to distress?—No.

In November it was 5·68 and in December 5·06. These were high. What were they due to?—Bowel complaints and fever.

Do you think privation has anything to do with it?—To some extent.

In January 1897 it was 6·62. That was also distress?—Yes, and disease due to privation.

You say if village relief had been opened there might have been a decreased mortality. In 1897, I suppose?—The people would not have the same amount of exposure as was the case on road-work relief.

Apparently the mortality in 1896 was as high as in 1897?—I don't think quite so high. I think the mortality in 1897 was very much higher than in 1896.

Do you think if relief-works had been opened in the autumn of 1896, this great mortality would have been decreased?—It would to some extent.

You say you think village relief-works would be more far-reaching and less expensive than making roads. In what way?—That is to say, it would be more far-reaching in reference to their own comforts.

I suppose many more would come on to works?—Yes.

And you would require more village works?—Yes, in each village.

And it would be less expensive with a large number of people?—I think so.

Do you think supervision would be possible?—I think so, with the aid of village people, malguzars and others. I have had numerous conversations with people in the villages, malguzars and landlords, and they say people would be much more benefited with a system of relief works in villages.

The objection is that it might not be a real test of necessity. They might become dangerously attractive. Have you considered that objection?—Yes, I have. Possibly it would be very attractive.

Is there any way by which you could limit the extent to what would be reasonable?—It would all depend upon the necessities of the village.

Who is to judge of these necessities do you think?—Inspecting officers and others.

RAO BAHADUR BEHARI LAL KHAZANCHI, of Jabalpur, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence and written answers to the Commission's questions.

B.—Degree of success which has attended the measures adopted considered primarily with regard to the relief of the distress and the saving of life, and secondarily, with regard to economy.

In the month of November 1896 relief works were started that relieved to a great extent the distress of the people and saved many lives. This has been confirmed from enquiry that I personally made in villages, but since work was started all at once extravagance to some extent was inevitable to save lives.

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C.—Advice as to the measures and methods of working which seemed likely to prove most effective in future in these two respects.

In future famines the following suggestions should, in my opinion, be adopted:—

I.—Several important public works should be opened in the several parts of the district, so that people of the

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villages adjacent to them may find work and be able to go back to their homes every day. It will effect economy, and the people in distress will not only get relief but remain in their homes without being under the necessity to go abroad. People who happen to come from other provinces, districts or States, should be employed in such important works.

II.—In villages inhabited by Gonds in out-of-the-way places which are far away from the relief-centres whence they cannot go back to their homes every day, village relief-works should be started; every five of such villages being made into a group. These relief-works should be entrusted to the mukaddam and malguzar; and supervision and guidance of work and payment of money to mukaddams should be made by the officer in charge of such works, which should be supervised by officers appointed for the purpose, such as Revenue Officers, Deputy Commissioners, etc. It will effect economy, as the arrangement will save the purchasing of tools, building of huts, and all arrangements to be made to provide water and grain, etc. By this arrangement money will go in the pocket of agricultural classes to their great benefit. This village relief-work should be of such a kind as will benefit agriculture in future. For instance, embankments round the fields of rabi crops and in villages which grow kharif, tanks should be excavated or embanked on all sides to hold water. Both these works will serve the same purpose as wells or canals do to other provinces. I consider village relief-work of the kind more beneficial, as I speak this from my own experience in my own villages. The people of my villages resorted to such works started by me in larger numbers than they would have gone to other works far from their homes. They thus received substantial relief, and few deaths occurred.

(7) *Suggestions which I think likely to be useful in future famines.*

D.—The following modifications and additions are necessary in the Famine Code:—

I.—The task-work given in section 7 is more than sufficient. I should think healthy and strong men cannot do as much work as is required of them; it should be reduced to a reasonable quantity so that it may not be hardship to them instead of being the means of relief.

II.—The quantity of food given in the poor-houses should be increased from what is provided in the Code, as it is not sufficient to keep body and soul together. As a visitor to the city poor-house I often used to hear complaints from the inmates about the insufficiency of food.

III.—Distribution of food should not be, as at present, to all classes mixed together.

IV.—*Kacha* food be given to high castes, such as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishiyas, etc., instead of cooked food.

V.—The sale of cheap grain in an appointed shop in towns and large villages by ticket system to special classes under the supervision of respectable gentlemen will do an immense good.

VI.—In future famines provision should be made in Famine Code for the suspension of land revenue; and if repeated failure of crops occur, the revenue should be remitted. In case of suspensions, recovery should spread over several seasons by means of instalments.

Answers to questions by Famine Commission.

* 1. The whole area of the district, containing a population of 749,362 souls.

10. I consider that the standard of 15 per cent. is very low, for in the last famine, which was general, the percentage of persons on relief in my own villages was 25 per cent.; besides which persons received gratuitous relief.

32. The net result of the famine alleviated by relief measures has been as follows:—

(1) The labourers who have been reduced to poverty will soon improve their condition as soon as they get work.

(2) The land-owning class has contracted debts.

(3) The cultivating non-proprietary class have been impoverished, but will soon improve their condition. The village citizens, such as carpenters, iron-smiths, Kushtas, etc., having spent all the little they had, attended relief works and maintained themselves and family. It will take some time to recover their former status, provided there are good crops successively for 3 or 4 years. The cultivating class will improve if successive harvests for 3 or 4 years are bumper ones.

71. The greatest distance at which the distressed inhabitants of a village may be induced to attend relief works is:—

(*a*) Three miles for inhabitants returning every night to their villages.

(*b*) Eight miles for inhabitants having chance of returning to their villages after every week to enable them to see to their domestic affairs. Persons residing beyond that distance should not be induced or compelled to reside at the relief works, for this would affect future cultivation.

72. It would not be practicable to withhold relief from all fairly able-bodied labourers who refuse to attend relief works at the distances specified in the answer to the last question on the ground of apprehending injury to their cultivation by their absence from the spot; or from causes over which they have no control and which compel them to stick to their villages, for instance in the case of persons having their relatives or members of their family seriously laid up in their houses, but village relief will be provided for them.

140. The works opened by me were not affected by the opening of relief-works in the neighbourhood.

141. No. The labourers were paid at the same rate as they received at the relief-works.

142. The relief works were situated at a place about 5 or 6 miles from my villages, but they did not affect the supply of labour.

143. I had no cause of complaint.

144. The establishment of relief-works was necessary as a means of preserving life, and the people who attended them could not have found sufficient employment, either on my works, where people of my own villages and no others could be employed, or elsewhere to earn at least a bare subsistence for themselves and their dependents.

145. Opening of the relief-works was necessary, but in villages situated at distances extending over and above 8 miles, where no works under the auspices of Government were carried on, it would have been advisable to open village relief works under the supervision of the malguzars concerned to enable the inhabitants of their villages to maintain themselves without being under the necessity of going to a distance to attend the relief-works.

146. No.

147. Please see answer to question No. 145.

151. In ordinary years people are assisted by their relatives; the widows supporting themselves by labour in the shape of grinding wheat and preparing other food-grains and on charity. During famine the supporting relatives and persons dispensing charity find it difficult to support themselves, and therefore they are thrown on the State for support.

160. No, it does not.

161. No. The knowledge that gratuitous relief is being given by the State does not dry up private charity, for in this city private charity continued to be dispensed as usual, but in villages the landholders and agricultural classes being themselves reduced to straightened circumstances, could not afford to continue their charitable work.

162. No light manual labour could have been exacted from such persons as they were severally either *pardanashin* women or respectable persons reduced to straits.

163. The malguzars if assisted could undertake the construction of embankments, tanks and other village works but not roads.

164. Cooked food at kitchens should be given to those who accept it; but respectable classes should be provided with gratuitous relief in the form of grain.

165. People of respectable class will rather prefer to die from starvation than receive cooked food in State kitchens. It is therefore necessary that people of low caste should be supplied with cooked food and the respectable classes with gratuitous relief in the form of grain.

167. Gratuitous relief in this district was given in the form of money. I prefer this, as grains were imported by

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

railway; but in stations where grain cannot be imported grain would be the best thing to be given.

174. Persons of the better castes and of respectable position objected to resort to the poor-house for relief. No degree of pressure would have induced them to go there unless forcibly compelled to do so. If the door of the poor-house was left unguarded, such respectable people brought in against their will would have left it, though suffering from the pangs of hunger and starvation. Besides this they would never mess along with people of different castes.

201. They have been of much benefit to the cultivating classes. More money could have been advantageously spent.

204. It would be preferable to assist a cultivator who is a pauper and who cannot be allowed a takavi, employing him in relief work if able-bodied, to making him an advance of money, as in the latter case such cultivators will not be able to repay the advance made. Able-bodied persons requiring relief should be required to work, while persons physically weak and unfit should receive gratuitous relief.

205. It is more economical to aid by advances such cultivators who possess some property in land and cattle than to offer them work and wages. Solvent and respectable cultivators should be allowed advances on better conditions than allowed to malguzars, and they should be required to pay two-thirds of the amount advanced in eight years without interest, the other one-third being remitted.

206. Yes. It would be preferable to pay a pauper cultivator after exacting work from him to advancing money, in the realization of which the cultivator will be put to trouble.

209. Suspension of land revenue has been very beneficial, for had not this indulgence been granted the malguzars and cultivators both would have been put to serious trouble and their holdings brought to hammer.

210. Suspensions of revenue granted in such villages in which bad harvests have successively followed and the prospect of the future still indifferent should be converted into remissions. In villages enjoying conditions quite the reverse, the Government demand should not be realized at once, but by instalments extending over two or three years, or otherwise difficulties will have to be met with in realizing the demand.

215. The landholding and cultivating classes have contracted heavy debts, and I may say most of the malguzars have contracted debts equal to what their estate was considered worth.

219. Mahua, tendu, achar fruits, and several sorts of edible roots. Government allowed the free use of the forest produce during the last famine; it should similarly declare free during next, if one occurs. The people were also enabled from the free use of the forest to support themselves by sale proceeds of bamboos, timber, grass which they brought out.

227. Yes.

228. Such a cheap grain shop was started in this district, but without interfering with private trade.

229. The opening of such a shop did operate to keep the market rate steady.

230. To render the help effective the relief to broken-down agriculturists should be given at the commencement of the sowing season irrespective of the distress being at its commencement or at its height.

231. Those having little or nothing left, and who cannot obtain takavi or loans, and also who cannot provide for cattle.

234. The Indian Charitable Relief Fund served a very useful purpose in alleviating the distress of many in addition to those relieved by the State.

235 and 236. Assistance in the following objects was rendered:—

(*a*) Under Objects I and II,—

Extra diet and clothing given to members of the poor-house and orphans.
Clothing to relief camp workers.
Kitchens opened for children.
Blankets given to the poor.

(*b*) Under Object III.—

Monthly reliefs given to *parda-nashin* women and respectable persons in impoverished circumstances.
Cheap grain shops were started.

(*c*) Under Object IV—

In assisting broken-down cultivators in the purchase of seed, cattle and their maintenance.

237. Distribution of blankets and opening of kitchens for children.

238. Assistance to *pardanashin* women, respectable families in an impoverished state, and the opening of cheap grain shops.

239. Yes.

240. Yes, it also did a great deal of good to the country.

273. In cities the food-grain ordinarily used in their homes by well-to-do labourers and artizans are wheat, gram, masoor, arhar, moong, urd, rice.

The villages in the interior are of two sorts—

(*a*) Where the rabi crop predominates, the inhabitants use wheat, grain, teora, rice, juar, mukka, masoor, arhar.

(*b*) Where the kharif crops predominate the inhabitants use rice, kodo, kutki, masoor, mahua.

274. Well-to-do labourers have two meals a day of 24 hours. During the day their meal consists of bread, rice and dal, at night bread, kodo and vegetables.

275. In the absence of ordinary food-grains during famine the people make use of the cheapest food-grain available. During the last famine they even made use of rice, rusts (konhda), oilcake and barks of trees.

276. During the famine people make use of the cheapest edibles or those procurable without cost and without considering if they are palatable or digestible or otherwise.

282. The high prices were due to the failure of crops in this district in these Provinces and all over India. In this district there was no stock of grain left of previous years, as there have been failure of crops for several years. It was not due to unreasonable panic or wild speculation and holding up for high profits.

283. The depreciation of silver has very little relation with the rising up of prices in the food-grains. People have, however, suffered in the disposal of silver ornaments. During the last twenty years the prices of grain have generally become high, specially wheat (*pisi*) which is exported, but the prices of other grain, such as kodo, gram, etc., remained stationary. In the famine, however, there was little or no difference in the prices of all the grains, and everything had become dear.

283(*a*). In the neighbouring districts the intensity of distress was greater than at Jabalpur, where Rangoon rice was imported from Calcutta, and from Jabalpur it was exported to other places as Damoh, Mandla and other districts where it was sold at a higher rate.

284. The grain dealers were many and active in trading in grain as they brought Rangoon rice, and so hard was the competition that they sold their stock at an easy price.

285. In the villages the prices were higher than what prevailed in Jabalpur and railway stations whence grain was exported to them.

286. The people on relief works or in the village were able to buy grain at the rate prevalent there; the rates were, however, higher than what prevailed in the town.

287. Grain was exported from this to other districts, owing to higher prices prevalent there, while rice was imported from them.

288. No fortune was made in the grain trade. What little profit was made was made by those persons who imported Rangoon rice from Calcutta and other places.

289. All grain pits and godowns were completely depleted, which made it necessary for grain dealers to import grain through Calcutta from Rangoon, and *makka* was imported from America.

290. No cultivator or land-holder had any surplus stock of food-grain.

291. When there was no surplus stock of food-grain there could be nothing to sell.

292. Yes. Wholesale prices were very near to retail sale as usual.

293. Owing to failure of crops and high prices the practice of storing food-grains in pits was very much diminished and in the last rabi crops only well-to-do land-holders were able to store up grain for seed.

296. Cultivators, labourers and artizans.

297. They had no money to buy and no work could be had owing to famine.

298. The wages instead of going up high went down, as there was little or no work to be employed on.

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299. Indian mill and foreign goods seriously reduced the purchasing power of the weaving class, cotton cleaners (Palna), oil mongers and grain grinders.

302. Cultivator, artizan, and labourer who had any brass pots, cattle and silver ornaments disposed them off at great loss owing to depreciation of silver, and felt much reluctant to do so.

304. In this town and district a large quantity of Burma rice was imported by Cutch merchants through Calcutta.

305. In my opinion merchants can import grain at places where there is railway line, but in places through which railway has not passed, import of grain by Government would be more advantageous.

(*The witness gave his evidence in the vernacular.*)

How many years have you been at Jabalpur?—I was born here.

In what year did you first observe signs of distress?—The harvest of 1894-95 was bad, and in September 1895 we had to open a poor-house.

Why was not a Government poor-house open then?—It was opened by private charity and works were also opened by the District Council.

Was it thought then that the relief given by private charity and by the District Council would be enough to meet the distress that then existed?—Yes, as a temporary measure.

You have said that groups should be made of four or five villages and relief works opened in each such group. But if relief be opened like this, all the villagers will come to such works?—Large works should be opened by Government, and the small village works should be for the benefit of the cultivators and weakly persons of the village.

But all the people will try to come to the village works?—Only such persons as are in need of relief would come, but not those who are sufficiently well-to-do. For instance, the census of my nine villages was 3,200, but on opening private works I found an attendance of only 800 or 900 persons who were absolutely poor.

You say that groups of villages should be formed, and then divided into circles where works should be opened for the relief of the poor. Do you mean to say that the relief works should be opened in each village?—The Government works cannot be opened in each village, but they should be opened at a distance of 4 or 5 miles from one place to another.

Government intends to give relief to all the poor in a circle by opening a work in one place?—People living within a distance of 4 miles from the works can return home every day, but those living at distance of 8 miles cannot so attend without harm to their cultivation. People of ordinary standing would like to go to a work close at hand, but not to a distant work. In the latter case their failure to attend would reduce them to extreme poverty.

Would the attendance of labourers increase if works are opened in each village, *i.e.*, the number increase from 30,000 to 60,000?—Probably the number may reach 60,000, but the number on village gratuitous relief and the poor-house population would be comparatively much less.

How can small works be supervised?—In a group of villages four or five hundred persons may be employed who can easily be supervised by a Revenue officer, provided the work be kept under the management of malguzars.

How can large works be opened, if small works are opened everywhere?—The opening of small works in a group of villages will not interfere with a large work, provided the latter be started at some distance in a place of importance.

Have you ever inspected a relief work, and was the rate of the daily wage sufficient for the ordinary support of a man?—Yes, I have seen the surrounding famine works. The amount of daily wage was sufficient, but the task-work required of them was a source of hardship.

Did you open any private work in your villages at your own cost, or have you had to obtain a loan from Government?—I started work by bunding fields in my villages, and digging a tank in one of them. I borrowed ₹ 5,000 from Government and also spent my own money on the above works. One-fourth of the takavi loan will be remitted and the rest recovered.

Rai Bahadur Ballabh Das deposed that ₹ 3,000 were collected for the poor-house here. Can you say if this is so?—Yes; I think that the amount collected was about ₹ 6,000 or a little more.

MR. F. A. T. PHILLIPS, Deputy Commissioner, Sangor, called in and examined.

Mr. F. A. T. Phillips.

17th Mar. 1898.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

(*A*)—*Departures from the principles of the Central Provinces Famine Code which have occurred in the Central Provinces during the recent famine.*

The first departure from the principles of the Code was the establishment of relief-centres, which may be described as a measure of relief intermediate between poor-houses and the relief of people in their homes. There were eight relief-centres in the Saugor District. They were opened at the end of December 1896 and beginning of January 1897, and were all closed by the end of March. The number of persons relieved at any one centre never exceeded 300. It was the intention to exact light work from them at each centre, but only at one centre was the exaction of work found possible. The expedient of relief-centres does not commend itself to me. People were drawn to a centre from neighbouring villages who were shortly afterwards sent back to their homes and given relief there. It seems to me that it would have been better to relieve them in their homes in the first instance.

Another departure from the principles of the Code was the abandonment in the rainy season of the classification, given in section 34, of persons entitled to gratuitous relief in their homes. Physical appearance was made the test of a person's title to such relief. A person showing signs of emaciation was admitted to it without any inquiry as to the existence of anybody able and bound to support. It was, in fact, presumed that there was nobody. I think that this departure was to some extent justifiable.

Another departure was the non-opening of test-works (section 13) at the commencement of the famine. The famine declared itself so suddenly and unmistakably in the autumn of 1896, that test-works were, I think, unnecessary. The failure of the crops after previous bad harvests, the rise of prices, and the deterioration in the physical condition of the people were ample indications of the existence of distress.

Another departure was the abandonment of the classification of relief-workers given in section 52. This point has already been much discussed. I need only say that the classification appears to be unnecessarily elaborate, and that the adoption of a more simple one was quite justified.

Another departure was the disregard of the rule laid down in section 49 that no famine relief-work shall be done on contract. The piece-work system introduced on one work in the district in the hot weather was in reality contract-work. I believe, however, that this was due to a mistake. Anyhow, this particular form of work, which tended to give abundant employment to the able-bodied, who least needed it, while it withheld employment from the weak, who most needed it, was soon stopped. A modified system of piece-work, which came to be known locally as the payment-by-results system, was subsequently introduced on all works, and was, I consider, a decided success. This too was a departure from the Code, which recognizes only task work.

Another departure was the payment of wages twice a week only instead of daily, even to labourers of class D (section 64). This was authorised by section 31 of the Public Works Department General Order No. C-498 of 26th December 1896. I am of opinion that the daily payment of wages should be strictly insisted on in all task-work.

With regard to wages, I suppose that the adoption of the *pice* unit for payments instead of paying to the nearest pie, must be regarded as another departure. As pics are not really current in the villages, this seems to be a quite necessary departure.

There was another departure in the fixation of task. This was rendered necessary by the abandonment of the Code classification of relief-workers.

In the rules for the management of poor-houses, it is laid down that the only paid officials should be the Superintendent, the Accountant, and the Hospital Assistant, and that the rest of the establishment should be taken from the

paupers themselves. It was not found quite possible to adhere to these instructions very closely.

I think these were the main departures from the principles of the Code.

(*B*)—*Degree of success which has attended the measures adopted, considered primarily with regard to the relief of distress and the saving of life, and secondarily, with respect to economy.*

The whole of the Saugor District, which has an area of 4,000 square miles and a population of 591,000 persons, was affected by the famine. The measures taken for the relief of distress consisted of:

1. The opening of relief-works—
   (*a*) under the Public Works Department.
   (*b*) under Civil Officers.
2. The establishment of poor-houses.
3. The establishment of relief-centres.
4. The distribution of village relief.
5. The establishment of children's kitchens.
6. The suspension of land revenue.
7. The grant of agricultural loans.
8. The opening of Government forests for the free collection of certain kinds of forest produce.

These measures, undertaken with funds provided by the State, were supplemented by the operations of the District Committee of the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund. The total number of persons relieved was largest at the end of May and beginning of June, when nearly 10 per cent. of the population were in receipt of relief. I think that the dictum of the Famine Commission of 1879, that the number ought not in the worst months to exceed 15 per cent., may certainly be accepted. It seems to me that the measures taken were, on the whole, successful with regard to the relief of distress and the saving of life. In December 1896 the ratio of deaths *per mille per annum* was 67. In January 1897 it was 63. It did not rise as high as this in any of the three succeeding months. In May it was 89 and in June 124. In each of these months cholera was prevalent to an unusual extent. If deaths from this cause be excluded, the ratio was 70 and 102 respectively. In July it was 99, in August 139, in September 137, and in October 101. In November it fell to 72, and in December, when the famine may be said to have disappeared, to 48. The mortality of the monsoon months was very high. But I do not think that it can be attributed to the inadequacy of the relief measures taken. Throughout that period a terrible epidemic of malarial fever prevailed. It was noticed that distress increased at a progressively rapid rate as the rainy season advanced, and gratuitous relief was extended accordingly, till, in the middle of October, the number of persons gratuitously relieved rose to more than 5 per cent. of the total population, whereas in the middle of June it had been a little more than 3 per cent. Still, despite this, the mortality remained very high. Bad harvests had been the lot of this district for some four years, and the physical condition of the people had undoubtedly deteriorated from privation which they had suffered in consequence, so that they were the less able to repel the attacks of disease. Thus an abnormally large number of persons fell victims to the malarial fever. It may be mentioned that the mortality always rises in this district in the monsoon months.

With regard to economy also, I think that the relief measures taken may, on the whole, be considered to have been successful. Work on the relief-works was indeed executed at a cost considerably above the normal. This was due to the great difficulty experienced in exacting a task. But the daily cost per head of persons relieved was very moderate.

(*C*)—*Advice as to the measures and methods of working which seem likely to prove most effective in these two respects.*

The Public Works Department General Order above cited lays down that the officer in charge of a relief-work should be of the standing of a Naib-Tahsildar, and that the number of relief-workers in one charge may be 6,000. I am of opinion that the officer in charge should, if possible, be of superior standing to that of a Naib-Tahsildar, and that the number of persons in a charge should not exceed 2,000 or at most 2,500

I have alluded above to the difficulty experienced in exacting a task. It seems to me that the modified piece-work or payment-by-results system should be introduced on a relief-work simultaneously with the task-work system, and that the two systems should exist side by side, task-work being given to the weak and piece-work to the strong. In this way a better outturn of work will, it seems to me, be secured.

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In administering village relief the paupers were at first given their dole of money daily. In the rainy season the system was changed, and they were paid for a month in advance. I am of opinion that there are many objections to the system of monthly payments, although from the point of view of accounts it is the simplest, and that the system of daily payments should be adhered to.

The rules relating to the management of children's kitchens are too elaborate and require simplification.

(*D*)—*Other recommendations or opinions thought likely to be useful in future famines.*

I have no special recommendation to make under this head. I may mention here that I have purposely made this written note brief, as I am hereafter to be orally examined by the Famine Commission, when, presumably, I shall be expected to amplify and explain what I have written, and to give evidence in much greater detail.

(*President.*)—When did you take charge of the Saugor District?—On the 24th November 1896.

Was that the first time you were in the district?—The first time since I was Assistant Commissioner at the end of 1880-81.

The district was in a very bad condition?—Yes, undoubtedly there was famine.

How long had that condition been going on?—It had been getting worse and worse for three years previously owing to bad crops.

Can you explain generally why relief works were not begun earlier in the district?—I suppose they were not considered necessary. Of course I cannot speak definitely prior to November 1896.

What district were you in before?—Narsinghpur.

Was Saugor in a different condition from Narsinghpur when you went there in November 1896?—It was distinctly worse than Narsinghpur. The character of the whole district is different. Narsinghpur has rich land, while Saugor is full of boulders and stony ground.

What were the first measures taken when you went there?—We started three new poor-houses and relief works in each tahsil by the 10th of December, and village centres also.

I suppose centres were started before village relief?—In Saugor very little before.

When did village relief begin?—In the last week of December.

What numbers do you think came to village relief first?—On the 15th December 221, 31st December 437, 15th January 1,335, 31st January 4,428. Speaking generally, it increased after that.

Increased gradually?—Yes, and then rapidly.

Were these village centres kitchens?—No, they were on the same system as village relief. People were given money and grain.

Then it was village relief paid at a centre?—Yes, that is really what it amounted to.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Was it restricted to the particular persons eligible for gratuitous relief under the Code?—Yes.

(*President.*)—Relief works were at once largely resorted to?—Yes, chiefly from the near neighbourhood of the works themselves. On the 31st December there were 20,000 on relief works.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Were these relief works all roads?—Yes, all Public Works Department relief works.

And started on the Code system?—Yes, task work.

And were B and D wages paid?—Yes.

In villages at a distance, how do you think the people got on?—They came gradually I think. There was work within 15 miles of every village in the district.

To what extent did people live on the works at that time of the year?—A comparatively small proportion.

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Did the others generally return to their own villages?—I think they did generally.

In the months of December, January, and February, when the task-work system was in force, do you think people were getting the B wage to any extent, or were they only getting the D wage?—The labourers mostly earned the D wage on task-work.

What grain was the wage based on?—Originally *jowari*. There had been a comparatively good crop of *jowari*. It was ten seers to the rupee.

Do you think people actually bought *jowari* or something cheaper?—I think they bought *jowari*.

Well, then, later on, was there any change in the system of wages on works?—Wages were increased because it was feared that the supply of *jowari* had gone from the district, and then they were based on an average mixture of wheat and gram at eight seers per rupee.

When?—At the beginning of April, I think.

When was the next change?—Practically there was no change again, because wheat and gram remained at that till the end of October.

Was piece-work introduced?—Yes, about the end of April on one or two works first of all.

Piece-work by contractors?—It was not supposed to be, but it practically amounted to that. I found that those who needed relief were not getting it, so I asked for a reversion from piece to task-work, on the road *viâ* Saugor to Rehli.

Was piece-work continued?—To the end of May. I think piece-work had been going on about five weeks only.

Then the work continued on task-work?—Yes, and I think modified task-work was subsequently introduced in the case of every work in the district during August.

That was payment by results?—Yes. That and task-work went on side by side.

What was the result of the introduction of that?—The result was not very apparent, I think. If it had any result at all it tended to decrease the numbers on relief-works. By that time the numbers had begun to go down apart from this. I think there was a natural disposition on the part of the people to return to their villages for cultivation by that time.

Was that introduced everywhere?—Throughout the district.

Were some of the works stopped at the same time?—One in Banda Tahsil, where the numbers had gone down to less than 500 and remained there.

A missionary gentleman, Mr. Ben Nevis Mitchell, is of opinion that the works were stopped three or four months too soon?—Well, I venture to think he is mistaken.

Do you think the D wage is sufficient to keep people in good bodily health?—Yes, I think so.

When calculated upon the actual grain they are using?—Yes.

Do you think they add to it from outside resources?—I daresay in some cases they do, but I don't think so as a rule.

Then how do you explain the difference between the D wage and the simple imprisonment ration?—I don't know, I am sure. I suppose they were fixed by two different agencies. In fixing the diet in prisons they had not the same thing in view. The famine rate is fixed with the object, I suppose, of giving a famine wage so as to give subsistence, and the object of the prison was to leave a margin.

You constantly saw people on works?—Yes.

There has been a difference of opinion about their appearance. What is your opinion?—I think when the works were first started they had a thin and drawn appearance, but speaking generally they steadily improved till the end of the hot weather.

In the rains how did they appear?—In the rains there was a certain amount of deterioration.

Do you think that was due to exposure?—Partly, and to insufficient clothing.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—You remark that piece-work was introduced on the contract system on one work?—I think I meant two works, two charges on the same road. It was partially tried on two other works.

Some confusion has been caused by the way in which piece-work has been spoken of. The first was piece-work before the orders of August, and the second payment-by-results system which came in afterwards. From this report I understand it was the first kind, piece-work with no limit?—On the Saugor-Rahatgarh road.

It says here that piece-work was subsequently discontinued at the request of the Deputy Commissioner, as sufficient encouragement was not offered to the really needy?—I had in my mind the Saugor-Rehli-Mohli road. I found that weakly people did not seem to be getting relief.

Had they the task-work system also going on?—Not then.

That was peculiar to this work?—I say so.

On other works you had task-work as well as piece-work?—I am not sure of the work on the Rehli-Mohli road. On the Saugor-Rahatgarh and Saugor-Cawnpore roads it was going on.

Now we come to the payment-by-results system. You say you consider that a decided success?—Yes.

The only difference between that and the original piece-work is that it was more stringent?—Yes, and there was task-work side by side.

If you provide task-work gangs you approve of piece-work?—Yes.

Do you approve of the limitation of the wage on piece-work?—I am not very decided in my opinion of that. I am open to conviction. I think there is something to be said on both sides.

Do you think there should be a limit of some sort?—I am not sure. As a matter of fact that particular kind of work lost its importance, comparatively speaking, because the numbers on relief works began to decline from August.

At any rate the objection you took to piece-work was that there was no task-work?—Yes, there were also minor objections in the management, which were not inherent in the system.

What?—I found the whole thing in the hands of one contractor. He was making his profit and didn't care about the coolies.

Was the contractor in charge of the work?—Not nominally; one of his agents was.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—When you first came to the district before general relief measures were started, what relief was going on?—Two poor-houses and one local work was going on at Saugor.

In addition to railway work?—Yes.

Railway work I suppose was under ordinary contract conditions?—Yes.

Do you think that afforded relief to necessitous persons?—I think to a considerable number.

Could only able-bodied persons live there?—Yes, only able-bodied persons could be themselves employed; but I think it afforded relief to their dependants through them.

Apparently throughout 1896 there was some road-work in the district. Do you happen to know whether it was under Code conditions or contract?—I don't think it was under Code conditions.

As regards the unpopularity of the Department of Public Works, what actually happened?—We found that in one case the officers in charge had been magnifying numbers. Of course that didn't affect the coolies; still it was one indication that there was gross mismanagement. He was subsequently convicted of criminal breach of trust. On another work we found a man had sent in a false bill of R800. He was also convicted and imprisoned.

Did this introduction of piece-work also contribute to a decrease in numbers?—I think so. Numbers fell from 28,000 in May to 18,000 in June. That was partly due to the introduction of the piece-work system. I think by that time we had got people to go back to their villages preparatory to the rains.

In July you went to 25,000?—In the meantime local works had been stopped.

Then the fall in May and June, to what extent do you think it was due to the introduction of piece-work?—It is difficult to say.

The death-rate was 5·8, excluding cholera, in May, and 8·5 in June. Can you account for that at all? Was that due to a decrease of public works?—I don't think so. I must confess it is difficult to account for that high mortality in June, unless the rains killed off a certain number of persons of weakly constitution. In Saugor we had a very heavy burst of rain.

In July there was an extension of the scope of Public Works kitchens?—Yes.

Did that have a good effect?—Yes, I think so.

With regard to the August system of payment by results, you stated that on one work a minor difference was that every worker was first placed on task-work and afterwards selected to piece-work, and the reverse on the other. What is the principle you would advocate?—Do you think you might begin with piece-work?—My opinions on the value of piece-work are not altogether formed, because there have been so many systems advocated and so much said on all sides. I have not had sufficient opportunities of forming an opinion on the point. With regard to piece-work as against task-work I am open to conviction.

If piece-work were introduced, do you agree that it should be carefully watched?—Yes.

In the August system there was a limit to the D wage. Have you any idea as to the wisdom of that?—I think it was a wise limitation as to that particular time. I think the D wage is a reasonable one.

(*President.*)—Why at that time?—Because there was reason for supposing that many people who were on the work were not really in need of relief.

Do you think it was the case?—I think so. There are always many people on relief works from the villages immediately surrounding. It was no trouble for them to return home.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Do you think that the relief-workers on the D wage saved at all?—I think they must have.

Why?—The main point was the extraordinary disappearance of copper coin.

When did that begin to flow back?—Not till the end of the hot weather.

With regard to relief works, were they fairly numerous and well distributed over the district?—Yes.

Did they serve all parts of the District?—Yes. There were two in every tahsil, besides local works under Civil officers.

And local works?—They were under the Deputy Commissioner and worked through the Tahsildar. They were not under the Executive Engineer.

What were these works?—All tanks.

Do you consider that class of work good?—Yes.

And do you think they were efficiently managed by Tahsildars?—Yes, I think so.

Would they compare favourably with Public Works?—I think so in actual value of work done.

And were all classes admitted, or did you exercise any discretion?—We admitted all persons who came.

Do you think you required your subsidiary small works for relief?—I think so. I think it was a protection, and the numbers that came showed that they were required.

I suppose there was a considerable objection to leave their villages and reside on works?—Yes.

Is it stronger in the case of cultivators than labourers?—Perhaps it is.

Had you many cultivators living on works?—No.

It has been suggested that there should be two systems. Cultivators and other persons who cannot leave their villages should be admitted to small works and others left to go to large works. Do you think such a scheme practicable?—It would be very difficult to enforce I think.

Would the selection be difficult?—Yes. I think it would require a very large amount of supervision. Natives would resort to trickery and all make themselves out to be cultivators.

Everybody would want to go to the small works?—Yes.

Were many works executed through loans?—A good many.

Have they been successful?—Very successful.

Do you think that people have properly applied the money?—Yes, speaking generally. There were two cases where the money was not properly applied and we took back the money.

I think you had certain conditions as to the class of persons who had to be employed?—The final orders were that there should be no inquisitorial scrutiny as to how the work was done, provided the inspecting officer was satisfied hat the work was well done.

Generally the recipient would try and get able-bodied persons; would he not?—Yes.

So that people who were in need may have been left out?—Possibly; at the same time I don't think all who took loans had that in view.

Would you advocate a more extensive use of such loans?—Yes, with my experience I would.

You don't approve of relief centres?—I think they were unnecessary.

(*President.*)—Was the dole in kind or in cash?—It was throughout in cash. It was in kind in one tahsil only, and that was stopped.

Are there any advantages in giving it in kind?—I think there are advantages, but we came to the conclusion that there was no real difficulty in paying them in cash, and it was much more convenient.

Did the children get doles?—The children got doles in villages only.

Do you think that parents fed their children properly?—I don't think they did in all cases.

Do you think they stinted their children as well as themselves?—Sometimes.

You said you thought that in some cases people saved from the D wage. How do you suppose they managed it?—I think it was chiefly in the case of families where the total earnings enabled them to feed themselves and leave something over.

Did they eat any cheaper food than the staple grain?—During the hot weather in one part people mixed mahua with their food to a very large extent. On the first work to be closed that was a common form. The officer-in-charge there said he thought a coolie could save half his wages by this mode.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—You are in favour of daily payment of wages. Did you succeed in paying the people daily?—Yes, eventually.

It is more understood by the coolie?—Yes, and it leaves the door less open to fraud and to mistakes in accounts.

As regards mortality; you refer to the high mortality in August, September and October 1897, and you attribute that to a terrible epidemic of malarial fever. Had you any special enquiry?—Yes.

What was the general result?—There were personal investigations in the villages and the general result was to confirm my idea.

How did that personal enquiry show that it was fever, as distinct from privation?—Because the questions put to the people were put with a view to elicit that point.

Were deaths numerous among the well-to-do?—Fairly numerous.

(*President.*)—Was it supposed to be simply fever, or privation and fever?—It may have been the result indirectly of privation. There is no question about the severity of the fever which attacked all classes. Of course the well-to-do were in many cases able to resist the attack. With regard to these village enquiries, the Civil Surgeon was in the best position to diagnose the cases. After enquiry into 2,000 deaths he stated that 1,286 were due to malarial fever, 711 to diarrhœa, *cancrum oris*, and similar diseases. There were only three deaths to which he was not able to assign any specific cause. He reported that he was quite satisfied from the answers of the villagers that all the symptoms were correct.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Is the death-rate now normal?—Yes.

What was it when you first came?—In November it was 75, in December 67.

These are in excess of the normal?—Yes.

Judging from what you saw, do you think relief measures should have been started earlier?—It is quite impossible for me to say. I can say with confidence that I don't think it was necessary in Narsinghpur.

You were in Narsinghpur during 1896?—Yes.

In Narsinghpur the death-rate was high in August?—I am sorry I have not got figures. I know the death-rate for 1895-96 was about the same as for 1894-95. I recorded that in my Revenue Report.

Do you think this high death-rate was due to privation?—I cannot say.

You are of opinion that there was no necessity for opening relief-works? Yes.

Mr. F. A. T. Phillips.

17th Mar. 1898.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—When you left Narsinghpur had relief measures been started? The whole of the arrangements had been made.

But not actually started?—No.

In Saugor were you troubled with many emigrants from Native States?—They were fairly numerous.

Did they contribute much to your poor-house population?—To a considerable extent. A census was taken in January and one in March. Out of a population of 3,340 in the poor-houses, 961 were strangers.

Where did they come from chiefly?—From Native States, from the North-Western Provinces, and from other districts of the Central Provinces.

On relief-works had you many?—From a census taken in January 1897 it appeared there were 5 per cent. A great many came from the North-Western Provinces and from the Lalitpur Sub-Division.

(*President.*)—Can you explain why they came from the North-Western Provinces?—I believe works had not been begun in that particular part at that time.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—Respecting emigration, you said that on works a census was taken in January, and that it was found 5 per cent. were strangers. Have you reason to believe that in other months the percentage was higher?—Yes.

What was the percentage supposed to be?—I cannot say, because no census was taken. The Executive Engineer and famine relief officer both reported that there was a considerable proportion, perhaps 25 per cent.; but no figures were given of people who had come from outside.

Is it not a fact that a very large portion of the Gadarwara poor-house was strangers?—Yes.

Excluding two works, was not provision made for task-work on all works?—Yes.

Was not the Narsinghpur *rabi* crop of 1896 a failure?—It was decidedly better than the *rabi* crop of 1894, but still not a good crop.

Did you open some local works in the hot season of 1896?—If I remember aright no works were opened in the hot season of 1896, that is, in the manner of relief-works. In 1895 we opened test-works and nobody came.

When did you first commence to raise private subscriptions?—Towards the end of the hot weather.

Poor-houses were opened with the subscriptions that were raised then?—Immediately.

How many?—Narsinghpur and Gadarwara. Then several were opened afterwards.

How long were they managed by private charity?—Till the 1st of December.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—In the Saugor District you thought the system of contractors was a failure as an instrument of relief?—Yes.

You had a very respectable person, Lala Nand Kishor was the the sole contractor?—He didn't appear on the books at all. His agent was suppose d to be the manager of the work.

Although you had a very respectable man, the contractors did not succeed?—That is my opinion.

Did many cattle die in the Saugor district?—I think more were killed than died. I don't know of any very great mortality.

Was there a very large sale?—Yes, to butchers.

Did they sell very cheap?—Yes, sometimes for two or three rupees each.

Was a very large number killed in the slaughter-house at Saugor?—Yes.

In one month was the number as high as 10,000?—I daresay.

Do you know when the poor-house at Saugor was started?—The poor-house at Saugor was first opened by private charity in July 1894.

(*President.*)—Do you think the number of cattle killed was to provide any extra food for relief-workers?—I should think not, because it was only in a few centres.

Was all that thrown away?—A great portion no doubt was eaten. It would come to the town population.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—Mr. Mitchell of Bina said that cultivators sold the bullocks which were purchased from takavi advances to pay land revenue?—I think that's an exaggerated statement. Mr. Mitchell, I believe, refers to villages round Bina. I know a case in which a Court of Wards tenant sold his cattle to pay his rent.

What was the percentage of agriculturists on relief-works in May?—11,584 cultivators out of 40,582.

How much did you spend out of the Mansion House Fund for relief of agriculturists?—We spent ₹1,90,000 for the *kharif* and ₹93,000 on the *rabi* up to date.

Do you think you could have spent much more if you had had the money?—Not very much more.

Do you think there was much sale of jewellery?—I believe they have disposed of all their ornaments, speaking generally.

MR. H. COLLET, Resident Engineer, East Indian Railway, Jabalpur, called in and examined.

Mr. H. Collet.

17th Mar. 1898.

I put in written answers to the Commission's questions.

*140. I have 200 miles of East Indian Railway in my charge which runs in nearly equal parts through the Central Provinces, Baghelkhand Agency, and the North-Western Provinces.

From the time of the opening of the relief-works to the end of 1897 I did not find the supply of labour affected to any great extent. During this period, however, I had no occasion to employ an abnormal number of men in that portion of my line which runs through the Central Provinces. But from January 1st, 1898, I wished to employ some 1,000 men above my normal muster at Sehora and Panagar on an average monthly wage of from ₹4-8 to ₹4-12, for a period of three months or so. After six weeks' recruiting I could only get 30 men, and was obliged eventually to import labour from Allahabad. For this labour I had to pay ₹5-8 per man per month, and also to incur the cost of transport. In previous years I have never experienced any difficulty in getting as many men as I wanted. Nor during the present famine had I any difficulty until the current year.

As regards that portion of my line which runs through the North-Western Provinces, I required 1,000 extra men in November 1897 at Shiurajpur, a place 30 miles distant from Allahabad. I had to import about half of these men from Allahabad at the same increase of wage.

As regards that portion of my line which runs through Baghelkhand, I have had no necessity to employ abnormal labour.

My ordinary requirements are roughly 800 men for 200 miles. This supply was maintained with no difficulty at all through the greater part of the famine, *i.e.*, in the Central Provinces up to the time of starting relief works.

The class of labour I refer to is coolie labour, slightly skilled, for maintaining the permanent-way of a railroad.

141. No, that is, taking April 1897 as the date from which relief works were opened on any large scale in the Central Provinces. In the North-Western Provinces I believe they were opened a good deal earlier. In November 1896 the rates for all labourers drawing less than ₹6 per mensem were made up to ₹6. There was no further raising of the rate. As regards contract work, I had to raise the rate for earthwork from ₹3-8 to ₹5 per thousand cubic feet. I had no large works of any other class in hand, but I suppose if I had, rates would have been forced up in the same proportion.

142. There were relief works within a belt of 2 miles either side of my line through the Central Provinces at about 5 miles' intervals. In the Baghelkhand Agency relief works were further apart; in the North-Western Provinces about the same as the Central Provinces, but as I have already pointed out, these relief-works throughout the time they were in existence did not affect the supply of labour; my rates having been raised before they began.

143. No.

144. Relief-works were absolutely necessary. I could not have employed anything like the number of men so relieved on my line. A line under construction might have been of material assistance: but not a line under maintenance.

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

145. Though I consider Government relief of some kind was necessary, I think the relief given was too high. In my case I only employ able-bodied full grown men at a wage of R6 per mensem. On the relief-works not only the head of the family, but every member of the family, including dependants and infants-in-arms, received an allowance. Thus the family would receive during relief operations perhaps two or three times its ordinary income. The effect of this I imagine to be that the coolie class has now got a certain sum of money in hand, and that until that has been spent, they will not come to work. To this I attribute the great difficulty I now experience in getting men to work. The only alternative is that the coolie class (beyond those required at this season for agricultural purposes) has been annihilated. I think therefore in the event of another famine the scale of wages paid might be considerably reduced. I understand that the ratio of cost of work, famine relief to ordinary, under Public Works Department, is 2·7 in Jabalpur District and in Damoh 5·2. I conclude that wages have been affected to much the same extent.

146. No. The area of Jabalpur District is 3,948 square miles, and the average number employed daily on relief works was 41,000. If the railway could have served a belt of 2 miles either side of the line throughout the 67 miles of the district through which it runs, it would have served an area of 268 square miles, say, one-fourteenth of the whole district. Assuming the relief population to be evenly distributed, the railway would have had to relieve 2,200 people daily. The normal number employed daily on way and works, both departmentally and by contractors, is, say, 7 to the mile or 469.

147. It has all along appeared to me that the money spent on relief-works would have ensured a better return if some system had been followed of spending the money, village by village, on irrigation, embankment, sanitation of villages, and improvement of village lands instead of breaking ballast that will not be used up for years if ever, or in making roads for the maintenance of which hereafter funds may not be available. In the former case improvement of the land would have brought an increase in the revenue, and thus a return on the expenditure. In the latter case it is doubtful if there will be any return.

(*President.*)—You are Resident Engineer of the East Indian Railway at Jabalpur?—Yes.

You have been constantly going up and down the railway for some years past?—Yes, for several years.

Where does your charge begin and end?—It begins here and ends at Allahabad.

Have you been much off the line of railway?—Not very far.

Do you think the famine was pretty evenly distributed, or did it vary?—I think from Katni to Allahabad the distress seemed pretty much the same everywhere.

When did it begin, do you think?—When I came in December 1895 I thought there was distress everywhere.

What were the signs of people needing relief?—I picked up people who died from starvation. Many people complained to me, even my own labourers.

Were these cases of picking up dead people numerous?—Not very numerous. I suppose I picked up perhaps two or three every month within the railway fencing.

Did the distress continue all along?—There was none in the North-Western Provinces; in the Central Provinces and Baghelkhand Agency there was. Labourers complained of prices being very high.

Have their wages been raised?—Yes, they were raised in November 1896.

How much?—About 33 per cent. If a man were drawing less than R6, his pay was made up to R6.

You say in your written note that while relief works were going on you did not find your supply of labour affected to any great extent?—Because I had already raised my wages.

From January 1898 you could not get any labour?—No, and I cannot get any extra labour now.

To what do you attribute that?—I think that the people from whom I draw my labour have made something out of famine relief, and now they are too well off.

They could hardly have made much money from famine relief?—The whole family makes money.

Does that apply to Allahabad as well as to this part of the country?—All through.

There has been a considerable reduction of population; has there not?—I understand there has.

And there is employment given by harvests?—At present there is. That has never interfered with my labour before.

But there has been a considerable reduction of population. That might explain it?—I only want 2,000 men. I don't think the population should have been so reduced as to make it difficult to get that number.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—At what point do you want them?—I want 1,000 men at Sehora and 1,000 at Burga.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—You cannot get 1,000 at Burga?—I could only get 30 after six weeks of recruiting.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—What rates did you offer?—At first I offered R4-8 and afterwards raised it to R5-8.

(*President.*)—Can you get them readily at R5-8?—I have got them at the Allahabad end now.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Is that the petty contract rate?—Daily labourers employed by the Railway Company.

(*President.*)—The District Superintendent of Police said that since 1894, 30,000 people had gone to Assam. That and the mortality combined would be likely to raise the rate of wages; would it not?—I don't know why it should raise wages.

It would diminish the supply of labour?—I don't think it should make it difficult to obtain 2,000 men.

You said as regards contract rate you had to raise the rate for earthwork from R3-8 to R5 per thousand cubic feet. When did you make that increase?—Within the last six months.

Whilst relief works were going on?—Yes.

You had only able-bodied, full-grown men?—Yes.

You don't employ women?—No.

I suppose the women got some work to do?—They may get work to do in the fields.

You say in your note that in the event of another famine, the scale of wages paid might be considerably reduced. Have you ever studied the question of the famine ration upon which the scale of rates is based?—I understand the famine wage is given according to the prices of food.

Have you ever studied the amount of the grain equivalent?—No. What I mean to say is that at a time of famine the family on works gets two or three times the ordinary rates.

It must be taken into account that prices of grain are nearly double the ordinary rates?—If a family gets nothing more than the double, they make money.

Have you any other suggestions to make?—No.

Do you think that relief measures were required before they were taken in hand?—Yes.

Would you say that of the Allahabad District?—I cannot speak about that. Certainly I think so here.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—When do you think they should have been begun?—I think they should have been universal all through 1896.

You suggest the coolie class may have been annihilated?—I cannot explain how it is. I cannot get men, so I can only suppose they have been annihilated by death or emigration.

I suppose the question will be solved eventually. The people cannot go on living on their savings?—No. I have never had trouble before in 11 years.

Still you admit that considerable relief measures were necessary when they were once started?—Yes.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—Why do you say your difficulties did not begin till January 1898?—Because the people have made money out of famine relief, and they do not want to work till they have spent it.

When paying a coolie R6 did any members of the family come to work?—I only employ able-bodied men.

Women and children did not come to your works?—No.

What is to prevent a man coming to you and the women and children going to relief works?—I think they did.

You pay the men more than we do?—Yes.

It would never interfere with your supply of labour if a family went to relief works?—No. Relief works never interfered at the time. It is only since they were closed.

Mr. H. Collet.

17th Mar. 1898.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—How long have you been in want of 2,000 men?—I have required 1,000 here since the 1st January.

Has that anything to do with agricultural employment now available?—No; because I never had that difficulty before.

(*President.*)—When you first began you were offering R4-8?—Yes. In November I raised it to R5-8 here.

Don't your contractors and other people give you any explanation?—They say they cannot get the men. One contractor says the men are all dead.

At the Commissioner's Court, Jabalpur.

THIRTY-SEVENTH DAY.

Friday, 18th March 1898.

PRESENT:

SIR J. B. LYALL, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I. (PRESIDENT.)

SURGEON-COLONEL J. RICHARDSON.
MR. T. W. HOLDERNESS, C.S.I.
MR. T. HIGHAM, C.I.E.
RAI BAHADUR B. K. BOSE, C.I.E.
MR. J. B. FULLER, C.I.E. (*Temporary Member for the Central Provinces.*)
MR. H. J. MCINTOSH, *Secretary.*

The REVD. MR. J. FRYER, Missionary, Church Missionary Society, called in and examined.

Revd. Mr. J. Fryer.

18th Mar. 1898.

(*President.*)—Do you live in Mandla?—In Patpara, six to seven miles from Mandla.

Have you been there long?—Since November 1893.

When did you begin to notice that the district was unusually distressed?—I returned in November 1896. I had heard from Mr. Moloney, who had been working in the district, that he had opened childrens' kitchens as early as July 1896.

What was supposed to be the cause of distress there?—The failure of crops.

Which crops had failed before that?—The winter season crops were much below the average.

Is it the autumn crops the people mostly depend upon?—Mostly.

What were the autumn crops of 1895-96 like?—I cannot say.

You were in the district in the autumn of 1895-96?—Yes, at Patpara.

You didn't notice anything in particular then?—No.

When you returned in November 1896, what was the state of things?—The people were, more or less, in an emaciated condition, and came to me for food.

What sort of people live around you?—Gonds, and a few Baigas.

When were relief-works opened by Government?—As far as I remember, it was about September 1896.

Before you came back?—Yes.

What were they?—Road-works. I think in the town of Mandla kitchens were opened.

Can you give us a little account as to what you saw, starting from November 1896?—In Patpara there were no Government works started at all. I started works in connection with the Church Missionary Society. I opened kitchens. I also gave people who were able to work as much as I could. I gave doles of grain away.

Did that go on all through the winter?—Yes.

Out of charitable funds?—No, private funds.

A road-work was opened at Shaipura?—I cannot say, I was at Patpara the whole time.

You only saw your own works?—Practically.

What kind of works did you open?—Children's kitchens, the building of an orphanage and a few kacha roads.

Was that sufficient to relieve the distress around you?—Well, I employ people of, I think, eight villages around me. There were others who came to me and left their children while they went to Government works. I kept their children for them.

What wage did you give the people you employed on works?—The men I gave a seer of rice a day. The women had the same as the men. There was no distinction. The childrea I fed.

A seer of unhusked rice?—No, husked rice.

Had they anything else to eat?—It is their staple food, there is rice or kodo; kodo we could not get.

How did you get rice? Was there any difficulty?—We got it from Mandla. We had to pay at the rate of 7 or 8 seers per rupee. It went down to 5½ seers at one time, I heard.

What was the means of transport?—Buffaloes.

Are they pack buffaloes?—Yes.

Who owned them?—We hired them by the month.

They belonged to Gonds?—We got them from Damoh. Buffaloes are used every year for our mission work.

You were fully occupied at home, I suppose, and had not much time to travel about the district?—No, I went to Mandla some times, that was very seldom.

Did you see anything of people on relief-works?—No.

When did distress become very acute?—When the rain started.

What do you think the reason was?—Hitherto they had lived on jungle-produce; of course when the rains came this jungle-produce became as poison to them.

I suppose comparatively few had gone on to works before that?—The Gonds, as a rule, are very repugnant to leaving their villages. You have to use a great deal of force to get them away.

When the distress became very acute in the rains, did you see any cases of death from privation or starvation?—I saw a great number. I have had as many as 300 in the poor-houses, of whom many died. There was a continual influx from the poor-house.

In case of another calamity how do you think some of the distress and mortality might be best obviated?—For myself, I am a great believer in village-relief, which was started. I think that is a splendid idea.

When was that organized in the district?—I cannot say exactly.

Very large numbers were on village-relief during the rains?—Yes, a great number.

In this village-relief, was the dole given in cash or grain?—What I saw was given in cash around Patpara.

If given in cash would they not have had difficulty in buying grain in their villages?—I think they would.

You didn't hear whether that difficulty was experienced or not?—No.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Do you think the population has decreased much, as far as you have seen, in consequence of the famine?—I think so myself.

Did you notice it?—Around the villages where I have been working, I think there is very little decrease, because in all the villages around Patpara I took them in hand at once.

You think there has been a decrease elsewhere?—From what I have heard.

Revd. Mr. J. Fryer.

18th Mar. 1898.

About the end of May, there was a change of system on relief-works. Did you hear whether that had any effect in keeping people off works?—No.

What people left their children with you?—Gondhs. They went to works.

How did you manage to get Gonds to work?—They came to me for relief, and if they were in good condition I would not employ them, but sent them to Government works.

Did they go, as a matter of fact?—I don't know. I sent them away.

You kept their children for them?—Yes.

You did not see anything of village-relief?—No.

Did you see many cases of death on the road side?—I met three one morning within a distance of 4 miles.

Were they Gonds?—I should say so.

(*President.*)—Was that on the road close to Patpara?—Between Patpara and Mandla; along the old road, which is much more used by villagers.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—How far from your Mission station was the nearest relief-work?—At Mandla, 6½ miles away.

There was the institution of village centres. Did you see anything of that?—No.

(*President.*)—Do you think the full mortality could have been reported?—I think not.

(*Dr. Richardson*). You say you saw bodies of many people who had died of starvation. What was the evidence that they died of starvation?—Their emaciated condition.

As to those who came to your relief-works, what was their condition?—Some were in fair condition, some were really unable to work; those I had to keep on particular diet. Many of them died, some recovered.

Did you give them any fixed scale of diet?—According to their condition. If they were very weak, I would keep them from solid food, but feed them on sago, etc.

How many had you under treatment at one time?—I think at the most there were from 300 to 400; many of them had come from a distance, some from Shaipura, in fact one or two from Rewa.

Were the majority Gonds from your district?—Yes.

Were the children much emaciated?—Yes, the mortality was greatest among children.

Was that in consequence of the bad state of health in which they came to you, or due to special disease?—There was no special disease. The majority of children were in this bad condition, which necessitated my building a hospital for them.

You said just now that you don't think the returns of mortality are to be relied upon. Do you think the numbers are understated?—I have not seen the returns.

Do you know the system in the various parts of the country for collecting figures as to births and deaths?—No.

Then that is an impression of yours?—Yes.

(*President.*)—Do you think in hard times the Gonds are likely to stint their children more than themselves?—Yes, I think it is fatal to give doles to a parent for its child. I have seen the parents take away the food from their children. That is why I made it a special point to feed the children separately.

Is that peculiar to the Gondh, or is it the case among others too?—I cannot say what it is among Hindus, I have never worked among them.

I suppose it is true of those people when they are in rather a half-starved condition?—Yes, I have not seen them at other times.

MR. T. HAYWARD, District Engineer, Saugor-Katni Railway, called in and examined.

Mr. T. Hayward.

18th Mar. 1898.

(*President.*)—You are a District Engineer on the Saugor-Katni Railway?—Yes.

Where are your head-quarters?—At Reti.

On what part of the line?—Nineteen miles from Katni in the Jabalpur District.

How long have you been there?—At Reti since September 1897. I was an Assistant, 13 miles further, towards Saugor, from March.

Before March you were in a different part of the country?—Yes.

When you first went to work in March 1897 did you see anything of the famine?—Yes, mostly relief-works that were going on. I saw no cases of absolute starvation there.

Was work going on on your railway?—Yes.

Your works were used as relief works?—There was a good deal of competition with Government relief work.

Were you working through contractors?—Yes.

Earthwork?—Yes and masonry.

Did you have to make an alteration of your rates on account of relief works?—In one place.

What were they?—They were originally R2-12 per thousand feet and I altered them to R3-8.

When was that alteration made?—In April.

Did it have any effect?—No.

You didn't raise them any higher?—We raised them at the end of June. That was not on account of relief works but on account of the dear rate of grain, which was then at 4½ seers at our works. I think it was due to a corner formed by banias. It was not the rate at Katni. Grain was selling at these rates at Mujgaon and Ahdra bazaars. We raised earthwork rates by R2.

How long did that last?—Till November.

Did that give you an abundant supply of labour?—Yes, there was a marked increase in the supply after that. Relief-works stopped about the same time as we increased our rates. That also helped to give us labour.

What was the condition of the people who came to your works?—They were in fairly good condition.

I suppose the contractors would not have taken anybody in a debilitated state?—They worked on the cowrie system, and would take any one who would carry a basketful of earth. They paid the carriers so.

How were the diggers paid?—By daily labour.

The contractors worked by piece-work?—Yes The bigger contractors had sub-contractors. The professional Loanias did their own digging.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Did the diggers belong to big contractors?—Yes, but as a rule the Loanias worked independently.

(*President.*)—What did the carriers contrive to earn by the cowrie system?—From 2¼ annas to 3 annas a day; that is, the women.

Was that worked out in any way?—I have often asked the people how much they got. I have never worked it out.

Were there many children on work?—Yes, a good many.

Were they big children?—From eight upwards.

How did these people camp out in the rains?—Some built *chuppurs*; a good many returned to their villages every day.

Did they work only in the day time or at night too?—As a rule only in the day time: they sometimes took advantage of moon light nights in the hot weather. There was no pressure put on them to work at night.

Did they break off in the middle of the day?—Usually. Those living on the works break off from 12 to 2 o'clock. The others arrived at 10 and broke off at 4.

Did you see anything of Government relief-works?—I have seen them at Pali, which was the principal one I was concerned with; that is about 8 miles west of Reti.

What month was that in?—It was in full swing at the end of March and continued till the middle of June.

Was that road-work?—No, irrigation bunds.

You don't know how they were being paid?—No. There were other relief-works, one at Mala in the Damoh District, and two near Katni.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—How many labourers had you on works?—They averaged about 10,000.

Mr. T. Hayward.

18th Mar. 1898.

How much imported labour was there?—About three or four thousand.

You saw the people on Government works?—Yes, in one case.

Did they seem a feebler class than the carriers on your works?—They belonged to the same class.

Were your carriers chiefly women and children?—Yes.

Have you any special objection to Government relief-works?—I think that near the railway the relief-works should be such as will not draw able-bodied people from the railway, as they did in our case. There should be kitchens or poor-houses for people who cannot get work on the railway.

I suppose you admit your works cannot provide altogether for inefficient labourers in distress?—No, we cannot.

Do you recognize the necessity of raising your rates in times when grain is very dear?—Yes, but I think a better system would be to sell the grain at a privileged rate to coolies.

Would the railway do that?—We were obliged to increase our rates in order to keep labourers. It is a question whether Government should sell grain at privileged rates in place of relief-works.

(*President.*)—You think Government ought to provide grain at low rates?—Yes.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Since the famine was over you have gone back to your old rates?—Yes.

Is there any difficulty in getting labour?—None. At present, on account of the crops, there is difficulty but that will soon be over.

In November and December had you any difficulty?—None at the end of November; in December we had quite enough labour.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—You succeeded Mr. Michel?—Yes.

Where were you before you took over this division?—I was at Ahdra, and before that at Jhansi.

Can you give me the exact rates you paid on the railway before relief-works were started. What did you pay for earthwork?—The rates varied accordingly to the soil. On black cotton soil it was R2-12 per thousand. That was initial.

What does that include?—Within 100 feet and 5 feet in height.

Additional lead?—Six annas a chain.

Lift?—That varies according to the soil. On loose rock and boulders it is a higher rate than for black cotton soil. The ordinary lift rates are as follows: 5—10 feet, eight annas; 10—15 feet, R1-2; 15—20 feet, R1-14; 20—25 feet R2-14; 25—30 feet R4-2, in addition to the rates for excavation.

This rate you paid big contractors?—Big and small.

What proportion gets to the labourer. What margin of profit?—I cannot tell that. Those who do their own work must make some profit out of it. I don't think sub-contractors made very much profit out of it.

What does a labourer actually get?—An ordinary coolie gets 3 annas a day for excavation.

They don't pay a coolie by daily labour?—Yes, as a rule. Sometimes he is paid by piece work.

How long do they work?—From about daylight till 12, and from 2 to sunset.

Were the women on daily labour?—Mostly cowrie work.

How is the cowrie system worked?—Coolies get so many cowries for a full basket of earth according to lead and lift.

Did the relief works affect your supply? Was it in respect of professional labour or ordinary coolie labour?—Ordinary coolie labour.

What distance were the works that affected your supply?—Their was one at Pali a quarter of a mile away.

If relief-works were started 10 miles from the railway, would that affect your supply?—Anything under half a day's march would. I think if they were at 10 miles distance it would certainly affect our works, though to no great extent.

Did you ever make complaints to anyone about the supply of labour?—As Assistant I made complaints to Mr. Michel, but I don't know if he ever complained to the famine authorities. There are no records in the office to that effect.

Was there any ballast broken for your line by relief workers?—About 10,000 feet.

Was that close to the line?—It was on the line.

Did that affect the supply of labour for your earthwork?—It lasted such a short time that I could not tell.

What did you do with it?—Took it over at our rates, R1-8 per hundred.

Have you any idea of what it cost to make?—I don't know.

Were you satisfied with the ballast?—Yes.

Do you know why it was stopped?—I don't know.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—When was it stopped?—I think in July.

With reference to the final sub-paragraph of para. 12 of Mr. Higham's Inspection Note on the relief-works in the Central Provinces, regarding the breaking of ballast, was that stopped at Mr. Michel's request?—No.

MR. G. G. WHITE, Executive Engineer, Hoshangabad Division, called in and examined.

Mr. G. G. White.

18th Mar. 1898.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

I.—DEPARTURES FROM THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES FAMINE CODE WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES DURING THE RECENT FAMINE.

* 39-45.—1. Piece-work was introduced on many of the charges in the Hoshangabad Division with the object of making the relief-works real tests of distress, for it was known that large numbers of the workers under the task-work system obtained relief which they did not really require.

The experiment was altogether successful, and resulted in large numbers of the above-mentioned class leaving the works, thereby making room for the more efficient relief of those who were really in want.

2. Wages were not always raised in the Hoshangabad District according to the rise in the price of grain, for the reason that the relief-works in the Nerbudda Valley were so swamped with applicants for relief, many of whom were obviously not in want, that it was necessary to keep down the wage to a mere subsistence one.

It was considered that the Code scale of wages was somewhat over-liberal, and it was also found that in practice the people, during the worst months of the famine, supplemented their grain diet largely with mahua, of which there was an apparently inexhaustible supply for the time being.

My opinion with regard to the advisability of paying less than the Code scale under the circumstances named is that, in future, we should trust rather to the execution of a proper task than to a low wage in order to keep out the not-in-want applicants; for the low wage is apt to press hardly on the weakly, the single ones, and the deserted wives with children. At any rate full scale should be worked to during the rains, when the discomforts of life on relief-works, especially on road-making, are quite sufficient to keep down the numbers.

3. The rule embodied in II. 4 of the G. O. C-498, requiring that charges should be split up as soon as the numbers exceeded 6,000, was not observed in practice, owing to want of staff and hutting accommodation. Once the rains have set in, these difficulties increase tenfold, and it may be taken as an axiom that in an open plain, like the Nerbudda Valley, when once a fixed number of camps has been established, that number has to be adhered to, and no minimum number of workers can be laid down for the group, and hardly for the individual camps.

Camps engaged in making road banks become quite unmanagable when they increase in size to a population of over 6,000 persons, and the staff cannot, for want of available men, be correspondingly increased, and during the rains the alternative to doubling the camps of increasing the staff is the only one available. This alternative is practically put out of reach by the difficulty of finding at short notice, or even at all, sufficient applicants for work on the staff; and this part of the difficulty is almost as great in the open season

*The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

when famine has been some time in full swing as in the rains. This being the position, we are brought face to face with the imperative necessity of reducing the famine relief system to one of extreme simplicity, and all refinements in matters such as classification, calculation by pies, daily payments to any except the weakly, must be ruthlessly cut out of the new Code, or at all events must go to the wall during the rainy season.

46—48. The particular combination of measures which I would recommend from my experience of the Nerbudda Division are fully stated in paragraphs 3 and 5 of the record of the proceedings of the Famine Conference held in that Division on the 18th January 1898, and need not be repeated here.

I have only to add my reasons for differing to some extent with the Civil officers in respect of the suitability of piece-work to the hill districts of Betul and Chhindwara. They are as follows:—That throughout the recent famine piece-work received in the former district a very thorough trial, almost from the commencement, in the form of task-work without a minimum wage. The results were in every way successful, the labourers kept in good condition, the mortality on the works was low, and the workers were contented. The piece-work system did not deter those in need of relief from coming to work. The difficulty of getting Gonds to leave their villages at all and of making them realize the existence of distant relief-works is responsible for any failure of the relief-works to attract necessitous people in those tracts. In favour of this view it may be noted that in several charges in the remoter parts of the Chhindwara and Betul districts, where task-work exclusively obtained, the numbers who came to work were very small for months together, though the mortality returns of the adjacent circles, in the latter district at least, showed the distress to be severe.

The favourable circumstances which contributed to the success of piece-work in Betul were as follows:—

(*a*) Famine work started on a metalled road, where there was already a strong nucleus of good workers who understood metal-breaking and assisted newcomers.

(*b*) The numbers on one charge only, and for a short period, exceeded 6,000, and were generally much less.

(*c*) The administration of the relief-works was in the hands of an exceptionally able and energetic European Sub-Divisional Officer, who could and did devote a large share of his personal supervision to details. Making due allowance for the above special circumstance, I limit my recommendation of the suitability of piece-work in the hill districts to those tracts in the close neighbourhood of established roads, and, with the extension of roads that is now going on in the tracts alluded to, I believe that the area that need be excluded from the piece-work programme in a future famine will be small.

49. Fines should be more rigorously enforced, but, if piece-work is introduced as elsewhere recommended, this inefficient weapon of relief-works management will cease to be of importance.

54. The Central Provinces are as yet in a backward state generally as far as communications are concerned. There is a complete district road scheme for the Province, and there now remains in the Nerbudda Division at the conclusion of famine operations a mileage of roads still to be constructed or raised in class as under:—

Hoshangabad	150
Narsinghpur	60
Nimar	125
Betul	227
Chhindwara	117
TOTAL .	679

This mileage will be reduced by the lengths annually constructed, but if the roads are constructed or maintained out of road cess revenue without more extensive assistance from Provincial Funds than has hitherto been granted, it appears that construction cannot proceed very rapidly, for the cost of maintaining the existing district roads had almost overtaken the revenue derived from road cesses before the famine, and the additional cost of maintaining the roads made during the famine will bring the cost of maintenance up to that amount, leaving no margin at all for new construction. It comes then to this, that there is a prospect of there being plenty of road work available in the Nerbudda Division for the next famine, but even after allowing for a slow rise in the cesses, there is considerably less prospect of the districts being able to maintain the roads, when constructed, after a future famine than after this one. It should be added that there will be more difficulty in utilising road construction as famine relief-works in a future famine, as the workers will have to go further afield from their homes to the work, and, if it is found that the extra distance is an insuperable objection, we shall have to fall back on the collection of metal on the roads already made, which are nearer the homes of the distressed.

Metal has not been collected during the late famine in any case in excess of the probable requirements of the next five or ten years.

Village tanks afford excellent work for famine labour. In the districts, however, of this Division tanks are few and far between, and I think it is certain that, if they were likely to be of permanent benefit to the villages, they would have been constructed, long ere this, by the malguzars and villagers. As a means of employing labour tank work is excellent and good results can be obtained, the principal reason of this being that the labour is concentrated and a large number of works can be supervised by a very small staff. No tanks were made by the Public Works Department in this Division during the late famine and but two or three by the Civil Department.

Regarding the prospect of the advantageous construction of impounding tanks in future famines, I understand that their utility for irrigation purposes is what is meant. If this is so, my reply is that the prospect is small, for in this black cotton soil country water is only required for short periods, about once in every five to ten years, and under such circumstances it is well known that irrigation cannot pay. On the other hand, a good tank is a boon to any village for washing and cattle-watering, and there is undoubtedly room for the construction of many hundred such tanks in this Division as famine relief-works. But the projects would of course have to be matured beforehand. Such tanks once made should be kept in repair by the villagers themselves.

67. At present I know of no irrigation project that can be usefully investigated as a possible future famine relief-work, which would be likely to produce directly or indirectly a revenue, but my attention has not been directed to a search for such projects, and it is possible that they are to be found. I should look first for sites for tanks on the plateaux of Betul and Chhindwara, where sugarcane is much grown and irrigated from shallow wells, the water there lying nearer the surface as a rule than in the low country.

II.—LARGE AND SMALL WORKS AND THE DISTANCE TEST.

71. Villagers will travel

(*a*) a maximum distance of two miles to a work and back to their homes at night, and

(*b*) 20 miles in the plains to a work where they intend to stay; 12 miles in the hills; and I think that relief should be withheld from all fairly able-bodied labourers who refuse to attend relief-works at the distances stated.

To transport the distressed population wholesale long distances of over 100 miles by rail to large public works would be an undertaking attended by much risk, for the people would not go willingly and the result would be a large increase to the wandering population and a high death-rate in the distressed district. But large drafts of able-bodied workers might, and should be, conveyed in this way from a useless work to a large work of public utility elsewhere. In the late famine the distance test was never given a thorough trial, and there is no apparent reason why strong men and women, who have made up their minds to leave their homes at all for work, should not take it wherever it is offered to them within reasonable limits.

72. In the late famine residence on the works has during the open season, been the rule even in the cases where villagers have their homes near at hand. In the rains it was impossible to provide hutting in the plains for more than about 25 to 33 per cent. of the workers, and the rest either went to their homes, if within a mile or two, or found such shelter as they could in the large village which was generally adjacent to the monsoon camps.

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Residence on the work was never made a definite condition of relief. It would have introduced an additional complication at a time when the charges were very crowded to have attempted to differentiate between those who lived near the works and those who lived further away, and besides there was no easy way of compelling the former to remain the night in camp.

In the cholera season it would of course be advantageous to keep all within camp limits, for the disease is as a rule contracted in the first instance by those who live out at nights and drink water from filthy nalas during the time of absence. In the rains the streams are fuller and there is not the same risk of cholera, and it is desirable to get rid of as many people as possible every night. It then becomes worth while to differentiate between those who live near at hand and others, for the accommodation is very limited and all the former are rigorously excluded.

76. The test of residence on the works being, as has been shown, no test at all, there is abundant evidence to show that persons not actually requiring relief resorted to the works.

There is the fact that when the road work moved away from a village a mile or two, many workers from that village dropped off, while a fresh contingent of healthy-looking people from the next village came on.

There is next the fact that on the introduction of piece-work, when all the able-bodied had really to work for their living, hundreds went away, those from far and near alike.

Residence on the works is no test at all in the open season, for when people who are not in want wish to earn a little money, and they see an opportunity close by, they will not be deterred by the fact that they may be refused permission to sleep on the works at night.

They are as comfortable there as at their homes, and there is an advantage in that they get better food, owing to the supervision exercised over the bania's supplies on the works.

In the rains residence is a very certain test of necessity, at all events in the plain tracts; on works situated in the jungles every worker has a hut and firewood, and can obtain good food on the spot with a facility that he does not enjoy at his own home.

On the whole I consider that a high task and low rate of wage are sufficient tests.

Undoubtedly the relief-works in the hilly tracts of Betul failed to attract the number of distressed people that one would have expected, and this result must be attributed principally to the unwillingness of the Gonds to leave their villages, while at the same time the difficulty of disseminating among them information as to the relief-works was contributory.

The disposable establishments were over-tasked during the late famine in dealing with the 20 charges in the part of the Nerbudda Division with which I was concerned; obviously then, even if such a staff could be doubled, and this is the greatest expansion possible, it would be quite inadequate to deal with the extraordinary number of charges that would be necessary, if works were to be arranged so that the majority of the workers could return to their homes daily.

The cost of hutting accommodation per worker actually accommodated was (*) spread over the average number of workers engaged during the rainy months of July, August, September, and October, this would work out to about (*) per head.

The cold and discomfort attendant on residence on the works affected, as was to be expected, the health of the workers to some extent, especially in the open plains, where it was difficult to get firewood and shelter in sufficient quantity. It was impossible to provide hutting all along the roads, and every shower of rain left the wretched people shivering in their scanty clothing. On this account useful work had to be abandoned in favour of useless work in the neighbourhood of roadside villages and the camp.

The condition of the people on the charges in the Nerbudda Valley sensibly deteriorated in the rains, and to the supposition that possibly the lean people were fresh importations from the villages, who had stayed at home till they could no longer maintain themselves and had taken the places of others who had become able-bodied and left the work, I can oppose the fact that I made this point a matter of particular investigation and discovered that they were all old workers.

Blankets and *dhotis* from the Charitable Fund were given to a large number of those who were absolutely in rags, but no material alleviation of the discomfort was possible owing to the large numbers that had to be dealt with. Considering too that earthwork in black cotton soil is in itself very difficult in the rains, owing to the stickiness of the clay, and that flooded nalas are another difficulty, I think that in a future famine arrangements should be made to dispense with that form of work during the rains, and to employ the people on ghat road making in hilly tracts, metal breaking, and consolidation on roads, preferably those that are already metalled, for where there is an existing road all difficulties are lessened.

III.—Task-work and Piece-work.

84. The proportion of labourers employed on task-work and piece-work respectively on the relief-works under my charge during the last five months of the famine when piece-work was admissible may be taken approximately as four to one. I consider the objections taken by the former Famine Commission to piece-work to be overstated.

Task-work and infirm gangs alongside the piece-work have been found to provide successfully for all who, though able to do some work are too weak or incompetent to earn subsistence wages at the rates offered. A limit to the amount earned on piece-work should certainly, in my opinion, be imposed, as without such limit there is an inducement to expert workmen, especially at stone-breaking, to come on the work and make money. There is also temptation to a contractor, where employed and given a percentage on the amount turned out in return for the services of his trained staff, to import expert labourers and thus increase the outturn and his percentage. A suitable arrangement is to fix the maximum amount that can be earned—in fact to resort to what is simply task-work without a minimum wage.

Regarding the size of working parties on earthwork, it was proved in the Betul District, where the numbers were comparatively small and manageable, that it is quite possible to measure up and pay individuals.

The borrow pits were divided into partitions containing each three days' work for a digger and his carriers. Each man cut out his slip leaving a small ridge between his pit and his neighbour's. Payments were made twice a week. Where, however, the numbers are large and this system cannot be practised for want of sufficient staff, parties of about 20 diggers and (male) fillers with 40 women and children make a convenient gang to treat as a unit for the assessment of fines. Single payments of wages due to whole task-work gangs have not been made to gangers in this Division. From what I noticed of the contractors' methods on relief-works they invariably dealt with individuals or groups of two or three and not with whole gangs.

There is not so much saving in establishment on piece-work as might be expected; for the pay of the workers depending entirely on the measurements, that business must receive extra attention. On task-work, when there is an over-pressure of work, the measurements of a number of pits can be left undone and the workers given the benefit of the doubt, the difference between a full and minimum wage being only a pice or two, whereas on piece-work it is much more.

Then with regard to the disbursement of wages, unless we are content to trust entirely to contractors' agents or departmental gangers, as much care must be taken in the distribution of wages as on task-work.

When contractors are employed, a considerable benefit accrues in the trained staff that all large contractors have at their beck and call, and though there is not much saving in point of expense from the use of these men, yet in face of the extreme difficulty of getting suitable work agents in famine time the field of supply that is thus opened out is valuable.

I think there would be some difficulty in inducing villagers who had never done any work of the kind before to resort to a relief-work where they knew they would have to do a fixed amount of unaccustomed work in order to get a day's pay.

Those who were used to such work, and who lived in the neighbourhood of main roads, would come readily enough, if really in want. But it is an essential condition of piece-work, to my mind, that newcomers should be put on task work at first for the first week, and longer in the case of those who really need a longer period in which to learn the work.

The classification that I would propose is that recommended after due consideration by the members of the Nerbudda Famine Conference and stated in paragraph 7 of the record

* Note.—The witness subsequently reported that he was unable to furnish the figures he intended to give.

of the proceedings. In this classification the mass of the adults, exclusive of dependants, is divided into two classes, (B) Diggers and stone breakers and (C) Carriers, with the three necessary adjunctive classes (A) Special (mates and menial establishment) (D) Infirms, (E) Children from 7 to 12. Children over 12 to be classed as (C) adults.

Wages . .	A	24 to 28 chattaks.
„ . .	B	19 „
„ . .	C, D	14 „
„ . .	E	8 to 10 „

This classification differs from that proposed by Mr. Higham in that the numbers in class B are increased by the inclusion of all able-bodied stone-breakers, for this form of labour, though not so hard as digging, is considerably harder than carrying.

The workers who correspond to Mr. Higham's class Z would be here divided into two classes, C and D, representing able-bodied and infirms respectively, but receiving the same wage.

During the late famine it was found convenient in practice to separate the D class into gangs that could be fined and gangs that on account of the weakliness of the workers were not to be fined, and it seems desirable to stereotype this difference by giving the latter class a name so that the famine returns may indicate correctly the condition of the relief-workers.

It is not proposed to lower the pay of the infirms below 14 chattaks, for a liberal diet is required to bring back to health and strength those who have run down. In order to simplify the accounts I would not propose to lower the task or wage of the woman or child (12—16) below that of the man in the same class. In many cases a woman can do as much work at carrying and stone-breaking as a man, and when she does so, she should have the opportunity and inducement of earning a full wage. When she does not do so, she is fined and thus automatically corrects any error made by pitching her wage too high.

Children below 12 may be allowed to work and help their parents. They do very little, but it is better to have them at work than idling about among the workers.

Moreover, if they were all fed in the kitchen, the numbers there would be undesirably increased, and in my experience it is quite as much as the kitchens can do to deal with the large numbers of children under seven.

For these reasons I would put the lowest working age at seven—the task might be half that of the C class and the wages eight to ten chattaks. Refinements such as that of calculating wages according to the cost of the component parts of a day's rations are quite impracticable on large relief-works, and should be excluded from the Famine Code.

99. Fines for short work should be strictly enforced in the case of all able-bodied workers, but it is impossible to do this unless the staff can somehow or other be largely increased. Charges must be kept down to 6,000, if work of any sort, task-work or piece-work, is to be systematically carried on, and it is here that I see the principal objection to a wholesale introduction of piece-work. For, if there is no one to measure up the work, it matters little whether it is called piece-work or task-work, the fact remains that the workers have to be fed, and tasks and contracts go to the wall equally. A contractor put on piece-work during the famine found himself wholly unable to lay out and measure up work for 2,000 people. This, however, was merely an experiment, and if piece-work were to come widely into vogue on famine-works, contractors would increase their staff and be equal to the occasion. But contractors would no more be able to deal with sudden increases of numbers on the works than we can.

100. The present restrictions as to fining below the minimum are unnecessary and inexpedient, or rather it should be said that the minimum wage is fixed too high.

Paragraph 84 of the Central Provinces Code lays down 14 chattaks as the minimum adult wage, while in paragraph 83 the penal ration for relief-worker sent to a poor-house is 14 oz., *i.e.*, 7 chattaks. It is not clear why if a man does not work on the relief-works he should be treated better than for sitting idle at the poor-house. An able-bodied worker who has been severely fined for a day or two sees at once that we are in earnest and mean to make him work, and the result is that he works well, but if he finds he cannot be fined more than a pice or two, he is content to accept a wage less than the full wage by perhaps 20 per cent. in return for 50 to 75 per cent. less work.

There is, I think, as much and more danger of the able-bodied running down in condition owing to a prolonged existence on the minimum wage, than from a brief experience of a real fining that brings them sharply to their bearings.

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It would be expedient, in my opinion, to fix the minimum wage at 10 chattaks for men and women of all classes, instead of 14 for men and 13 for women as at present.

In order to abbreviate the length of this note I will deal with the rest of the points on which my evidence is required by simply noting brief replies to each question asked by the Famine Commission, reserving as a rule further explanations for production if required when called up for examination.

101. Yes.

102. Yes.

103. Yes, a day of rest is necessary in the hot weather, but not in the rains and autumn, when stoppages, for rainy days and native holidays give sufficient relaxation. Bazar day may with advantage be substituted for Sunday.

104. Possible, but difficult with the usual staff.

108. The smaller the number of the unit working party, the better—down to three or four diggers and the necessary complement of fillers and carriers.

109. No.

112. The proportion of adult women to men has been greater in the plains than in the hills.

The proportion of women to men has been less as a rule on piece-work, because selected drafts were usually made from task-work to piece-work, the numbers being first correctly proportioned.

113. The preponderance of women was largely due to wife desertion, and to the men remaining on work at home and elsewhere, where there was only work for themselves, and sending their wives and children to the relief-works where there was work for all. This being the case it was really necessary for the State to support these women and children.

Relations of Civil and P. W. officers, etc.

114. Civil officers should undertake small works such as road repairs and village tanks in the interior, with a number of workers up to 1,000, but preferably not exceeding 500; Public Works Officers all larger works.

115—117. No powers of control should in my opinion be exercised by Collector and Commissioner nor, *à fortiori*, by any of their subordinates in regard to works of which the Public Works Department has once undertaken responsibility. I agree in every point with Mr. Higham's remarks in paragraph 34 of his report. The system he there proposes is as closely as possible that which has obtained in this Division and which has worked with perfect success.

118. The best of the class of Naib-Tahsildars that were utilised during the late famine may be said to be suitable officers-in-charge. Out of 24 officers-in-charge, with whom I had to do for longer or shorter periods, about 12 may be described as suitable. Even the best of them are far from ideal officers-in-charge. They are, as a class, timid and afraid of making enemies, and not strong enough to exercise the necessary control over their staff. It would pay Government to employ men of an altogether higher class, but in the event of there being none such available I can suggest no better class of men for the work than those we have lately employed. But I would strengthen them by giving each officer-in-charge of a work of over 3,000 a deputy or assistant of the same class as himself, and, if obtainable, I would attach a Staff Corps inspecting officer to every three or four large charges, or at least one to each Sub-Division. Both he and the officer-in-charge would be under the orders only of the Public Works Department, the former directly under the Divisional Officer and the latter, as now, under the Sub-Divisional Officers. The Public Works officers should control all matters within the relief camp mentioned in question 120, but in regard to the banias and supply of grain the valuable aid of the Deputy Commissioner is essential.

It is quite unnecessary and undesirable that any one connected with camps should be invested with magisterial powers for the maintenance of order.

122. No difference as far as I know.

123. No.

127-128. No.

129. 6,000 is the maximum number that can be properly managed. 1,000 is a suitable minimum.

130. I am in favour of kitchens for children wherever they can be arranged for, but in cases where workers are spread out along many miles of road the cash dole cannot altogether be dispensed with.

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VI-A.—Interference with supply of labour to private employers.

133. At one period only, *viz.*, the weeding season, in the plains, were complaints brought to my officers-in-charge by the malguzars to the effect that they could not get labourers for their fields. On investigation I found the reason was that the malguzars, themselves impoverished, at first offered little, if any, more than the remuneration of ordinary times, which did not amount to subsistence wages. The effect of the proximity of the relief-works was good, for the field labour rates were forced up to subsistence wage and the complaints then ceased.

Relief Kitchens.

196. On some works the ticket system was worked and on some not, but cooked food was invariably given to all applicants, whether from the works or adjacent villages and irrespectively of the fact of their having tickets or no. The ticket system should, in future, be adopted as far as possible; tickets of three different sizes should be given to the three grades into which it is convenient to divide children under seven, who form the large majority of applicants.

The scale of rations which I found kept healthy children in good condition was the following:—

Years of age.	Chattaks of rice and flour.	Chattaks of dal.
7—6	4	½
5—4	3	½
3—2	2	¼

All who could not digest the above were fed specially in hospital. Weakly children were brought into condition by the addition to the above ration of three or four chattaks of milk. They may not consume the whole, but they get a choice and the method is certainly effective.

Strict supervision over the persons in charge of kitchens was very difficult to maintain.

There was no waste, but much misapplication of food, or rather of the price of it, collusion with that object between the kitchen muharrir, a man on R10 a month and the sole manager in kitchens away from head-quarters, and the bania being the rule. Closer supervision in order to stop this was attempted, and the offenders were summarily dismissed when detected. Nothing further can be done in kitchens away from the head-quarters of a camp, for it is practically impossible to obtain legal proof of these malpractices, the children being too young to bear witness.

In the result the children get I should say about four-fifths of the ration paid for, and the ration should be fixed with reference to this consideration.

The Hospital Assistant was in charge of the kitchens at head-quarters, but this official has not time to attend to them in addition to his other duties, and respectable independent managers should be appointed. Cooked food to children and dependants is preferable to the money dole.

(*President.*)—You are Executive Engineer of the Hoshangabad Division?—Yes.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—How many districts did your Division include?—Hoshangabad, Betul, and Nimar.

What was the maximum number of labourers employed?—About eighty-five thousand, including dependants.

The population of the district was about 500,000?—Of the Hoshangabad District, yes.

You tried piece-work on a considerable scale, did you not?—We gave it a very fair trial, I think.

In all three districts?—In Nimar there was a very small number; on the smaller charges in Hoshangabad we introduced it effectively, and in Betul we introduced it a good deal.

Why could not you introduce it on the large charges?—The difficulty was to get any work done at all there. Our staff was poor, and it was very difficult to set piece-work going.

You did not have task-work on the Code system?—On ordinary charges, yes, as nearly as we could; on overcrowded charges, no. All rules go to the wall where you have numbers over 6,000, that is my experience.

The tasks were not measured?—Not properly.

You got all the work you could out of the men?—Yes.

In these charges in which you introduced piece-work, was an attempt made to do it entirely by the piece?—Not entirely. We put only a few gangs to piece-work, and the large bulk to task-work. We had not the staff to introduce it.

You say in your written statement that the proportion of task-work to piece-work was 4 to 1?—I am afraid I overstated it there. It was a good deal less in Hoshangabad. As a matter of fact there was only a small proportion on real piece-work, though there were at times latterly large numbers nominally so. In Betul there were 4,000 to 5,000 on real piece-work.

Were there any on task-work?—Yes; the infirm gangs. On large works the bulk was task-work.

Were all the people on task-work infirm?—No.

Why were they not put on piece-work?—Because we could not introduce the system for want of staff. The difficulties were so great at the time.

How did you manage to introduce it?—We drafted selected gangs; they had to be able-bodied men and women in a fair proportion, and they were drafted to a big contractor.

You selected the strongest?—Yes.

What was the limit as to number?—The power of the contractor to employ them.

Were there many other able-bodied persons who might have been sent?—Yes, if we had contractors and everything ready.

In Betul you had Gonds?—Yes, a great many.

Did they work on the piece?—Yes.

How did they behave on works?—Very well indeed. They took to it at once. I think the reason was that they were people who had been employed on the high road to Betul, and were accustomed to the work. There was a nucleus who understood the work and taught the rest.

Did they know what payment they were entitled to?—Yes, very well.

What was the unit of payment?—A hundred cubic feet, both on metalling and earthwork.

Were the Gonds able to measure up their work?—Yes, they understood the hundred foot measure.

Was your piece-work done by the agency of contractors?—No, a great deal was done by departmental agency.

You gave the work to gangs?—No, to individuals in Betul.

You paid each individual according to the work done?—Yes.

Was there road-metalling?—Yes, also earthwork.

How did you pay each individual?—The numbers were not large.

Did you pay each digger on earthwork?—Yes; every three days. We could not have paid them daily.

Did you employ the whole of the Betul gangs on piece-work?—Yes, except on 3 small charges where piece-work was vetoed by the Commissioner.

Where you had departmental piece-work, did you keep a muster of labourers?—Yes, the usual papers were kept up just the same—a nominal muster roll.

Had you a nominal muster roll every day?—Yes.

The great advantage on piece-work is that you don't pay a number?—Of course this system cannot be worked with large numbers. We had a very good Sub-Divisional Officer there who was able to introduce and work the system.

The only point about the system is that it enables you to work without restriction?—Yes.

If a man did no work he got nothing for it?—Quite so, being an able-bodied man.

When was that introduced?—Well, in Shahpur I believe almost from the beginning. I only came in April.

It was not called piece-work?—It was called task-work without a minimum.

When did you begin introducing contractors?—At the end of May.

Do you consider contractors were a success?—Yes, I do on the whole. I don't think they had a fair trial.

The contractors were not able to take more than one-fifth part of your labour?—No, they did not have a fair trial, and most of their staff had been absorbed by Public Works. If they had known that they were to be employed from the first they would have done much better.

You say in answer to question No. 84 a limit to the amount earned on piece-work should certainly be imposed.

How did you impose a limit when working with contractors? Does the contractor pay his men by daily labour?—No. He measures up the work every three days. I gave the contractor Rs. 6 per thousand cubic feet of earth work and he was ordered to pay his coolies Rs. 4 out of that.

How did you insist on this limit?—You can only do it by checking the total amount of work done now and again and the number of people employed.

You have to get a record of the people employed in each pit?—No.

The contractor has to pay on the work done. You propose to employ contractors and to limit the earnings of workers. I don't understand how you propose to do it?—I was not thinking so much of contractors as of departmental piece-work.

If you have contractors it would be very difficult to impose a check?—Yes.

Do you consider in your district there is still a great deal of room for road work as relief work in future?—Not for new roads. I don't think there is any money for keeping them up. It is an economic reason rather than a practical.

In the Provincial programme are any more roads to be made?—About 400 miles in Hoshangabad Division.

They are limited by the inability of the district funds to maintain them?—Yes, quite so.

What do you think of village tanks?—They are conveniences for people in the neighbourhood.

Are tanks required in all the villages?—I don't think they are, or else they would have been made before now.

Do you think roads are more beneficial than tanks?—Yes.

Is there more scope for relief works?—Yes, principally in breaking metal.

You say in reply to question No. 76 the test of residence on the works being, as has been shown, no test at all, there is abundant evidence to show that persons not actually requiring relief resorted to the works. What was the evidence you most relied on?—That people from one village left as soon as the work moved on.

How long was the work in one village?—It is impossible to say; perhaps a week or a fortnight.

Do you think it possible that the people might be very glad to earn something in that time to keep them going afterwards?—Their coming for short times and only when the work is at their door shows that they have no real need of relief. I suppose they have some grain stored up.

Would it not be right to earn something while they can in the vicinity?—Yes.

With reference to what you said in answer to question No. 76, is that the only reason why you think people came who did not want relief?—They went away when piece-work came, which is another reason.

Who were the people who went away?—The able-bodied.

How much were they able to earn on piece-work more than the Code wage?—I don't think on the average they earned more. Isolated cases earned more.

Before the introduction of the August rule?—Yes.

What was the effect of piece-work before August?—It drove people away from the relief-works to the agricultural work; those who did not require relief in my opinion.

You only drafted a few on to piece-works. Did these leave the works?—A great many did. We kept constantly drafting people to piece-work and they constantly failed to turn up.

The bulk of the people were still retained on task-work?—Yes.

Then you drafted selected able-bodied persons to piece-work?—Yes.

And you considered the effect of their leaving the works that they did not require relief?—Yes.

You say that the condition of the people sensibly deteriorated in the rains?—Yes.

Do you attribute that at all to the introduction of piece-work?—No, not at all; to the hardships of life on the work in the rains.

To exposure?—Yes and insufficient hutting, and not only that, but you may have as many huts as you like, still the men must be caught in the rain when they are at work and wetted through.

From the 1st of August you introduced the payment by results system?—Yes, gradually.

Would the effect not be to reduce the earnings?—Yes, but that did not come in till the end of the rains.

When did you introduce that system?—Beginning of September.

Had you anything in your district in the rains in the matter of drafting people to village relief?—A great number of the able-bodied persons were sent away.

As regards the feeble, were they sent away to village relief works, or were they put on to gratuitous relief?—No; feeble persons were sent away; they got practically gratuitous relief on the works.

The feeble were kept on works all through the rains?—Yes.

(*President.*)—Were not a number of works closed?—No. We found it better to reduce the able-bodied on a number of works than to close some works and keep others intact.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Was that by refusing admission?—Yes to the able-bodied to task work charges; they were referred to the nearest piece-work charge.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—When you introduced piece-work, what was the basis of piece-work rates?—My own experience as to what contractors usually get.

You paid them with reference to the normal cost?—Yes.

When you gave work to contractors what were the rates paid?—The contractors were given a rate from 25 to 50 per cent. over the normal rate.

How did you arrive at that?—I fixed it from my experience and knowledge of rates.

Was the stipulation that he should pay people R4?—Yes, for earthwork. The coolies were to get about two-thirds.

That was about the proportion all through?—Yes.

In the case of metalling what were your rates?—They varied in different places.

I mean with reference to the normal rates?—About 25 to 50 per cent. over.

You worked on that principle?—Yes.

Two-thirds was the rate given to labourers and one-third to the contractor?—Yes.

When you introduced the payment by results system, did you work on the same rates?—No, we gave a lower rate to coolies.

Had the contractors disappeared?—Yes, sent away; we had then to pay through the staff.

Did you pay the coolies what the contractors were supposed to be paying them before?—Yes.

When the piece-work contractors were introduced works were overcrowded?—Yes.

So that you could not manage your charges without increasing the staff?—No, we could not get adequate tasks.

It was successful and resulted in large numbers of the labourers leaving the works. Is that a test of success that they left the works?—Yes. I think it proved it, the object of relief-work being to support only those in real need of relief.

If you had a larger staff could you have imposed a real test?—I think so.

Do you think contractors on the whole a success?—Yes.

Do you agree with the Deputy Commissioner, Hoshangabad, who wrote, "on all works except one the contract system was adopted. The system was a failure. Complaints became frequent, and owing to the want of any close check on the measurements and payments, it was impossible to ascertain real truth of the complaints"?—I do not.

The Deputy Commissioner, Betul, wrote in a similar strain. What is your opinion?—Those officers had not the same intimate acquaintance with the works that I had; there was another reason. Complaints made to Civil authorities were generally inspired by the task-work staff. From the officer in charge of the gang down to the mohurrir it was to everybody's interest to have task-work.

Do you think contractors behaved well?—Yes.

You say relief works in the hilly tracts of Betul failed to attract the number of distressed people that one would have expected, and this result must be attributed principally to the unwillingness of the Gonds to leave their

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villages, while at the same time the difficulties of disseminating among them information as to the relief works were contributory. Then do you agree with this opinion of Mr. Ryves, Deputy Commissioner of Chhindwara?—He says "several contractors were employed who were paid according to the outturn of work done at fixed rates, subordinate rates being settled at which the contractors agreed to pay the labourers in their employ. The measure was not a success?" —No, I do not.

Did you look into these complaints?—Yes. I went very carefully into them.

Were you satisfied that they were groundless in all cases? Mr. Ryves distinctly says the supervision of the contractors and their servants was very unpopular with the Gonds and Korkus, and nearly all these aborigines deserted the work at once and for good. Do you think that is a fact. Did you look into that point?—I think he was mistaken. There was always a large proportion of Gonds on those works.

Still you are in favour of not introducing piece-work in the whole district?—Yes.

You would gradually draft them from task to piece-work?—Yes, but I would not let them get accustomed to task-work.

If you had sufficient establishment, would you prefer contractors or do without contractors?—I think when the people are able-bodied the contractor is a good medium, but if the people are in bad condition I think the departmental system is safer.

One objection is the breaking up of families?—I never allowed that to occur.

Will contractors always accept them all?—That is a difficulty.

How far from the works did your people generally come? —From a considerable distance. From about 20 miles around.

It has been said that relief works only serve a radius of 5 or 6 miles?—No, I don't agree with that.

Were you able to keep the people fairly dry and in good condition during the rains?—No, I am afraid I cannot say that; certainly not in the earth-work charges in the plains.

In the Nerbudda Valley district did you do anything but road work?—Only metal-breaking at a few places.

I see in answer to question 84 you say you would not reduce the women's wage below 14 chattaks?—No.

Is that about what she has had under the D scale?—Thirteen.

Do you think that was a little too low?—I recommend it for simplicity.

When your labourers were on task-work, were they mostly on B or D, or what class?—Mostly on B in the hot weather.

Did they actually get the B wage, or were they fined down below this?—No, the wage was not reduced exactly as the price of grain rose. There was very little fining.

Subject to that people classed in B class got the B wage or whatever was fixed?—No, they did not get quite that.

Did the people get the B wage?—No.

What did they get?—About a pice less.

Was that under the orders of the Chief Engineer or Commissioner?—I don't know of any special orders on the subject but the rule that workers were only to get full B wages for full tasks practically covered it.

Why was it done?—It was thought that they were getting too much.

Was that done before you took to piece-work?—Yes.

That was to keep down numbers?—Yes, of able-bodied idlers not in need of relief.

Why did not you reduce them to D class?—It amounted to that.

They were classed as B and got the D wage?—Yes, nearly that.

They got something intermediate apparently?—Yes.

In Betul they were always paid by results?—Yes.

How many people were there on works there?—They went up to 19,000 once for a short time. As a rule there were 10,000. The weakly people were divided into two classes, those you might fine and those you could not. No weakly person ever got less than the D wage. For able-bodied there was no minimum. The result was that all worked very well. We had a particularly good English overseer in Betul and small numbers to deal with.

You say in answer to question No. 100 that there is as much and more danger of the able-bodied running down in condition, owing to a prolonged existence on the minimum wage, than from a brief experience of real fining. Did you fine them yourself?—It is very difficult to say what the running down was due to. We only noticed it in the rains. In Betul there was real fining.

You did not notice it till then?—No.

(*President.*)—With reference to that same answer, I suppose that would be the case if there was not a large supply of Mhowa or anything of that sort in the villages?—Yes.

You say in answer to question No. 112 the proportion of women to men has been less as a rule on piece-work, because selected drafts were usually made from task-work to piece-work, the numbers being first correctly proportioned. Did not that involve almost necessarily the breaking up of families?—No, we took great care not to do that. We told them to call their people around, and if it was a large family we did not draft them to piece-work, but left them on task-work.

You say in your answer to question No. 76, "the condition of the people on the charges in the Nerbudda Valley "sensibly deteriorated in the rains, and to the supposition "that possibly the lean people were fresh importations from "the villages, who had stayed at home till they could no "longer maintain themselves and had taken the places of "others who had become able-bodied and left the work, I "can oppose the fact that I made this point a matter of particular investigation and discovered that they were all old "workers." Can you tell us why you made that a matter of particular investigation. Were you ordered to?—Because I heard it explained in that way. No.

Do you think that was the result of exposure, or underfeeding, or both?—I think both.

When were works closed in Hoshangabad?—During October and in Betul during November.

Was there any difficulty in getting people to go away?—Not the slightest.

Did you pay them anything to take them home?—Three days' pay.

I suppose the numbers had fallen greatly by that time? —Yes, they had.

Were prices still very high?—Yes, 7½ seers in September and 9½ seers per rupee in October.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—Is that jowari?—The staple grain as given by the Commissioner in his report.

(*President.*)—What were prices at that time?—I think about the same.

You don't think the works were closed too soon, do you? —Not at all.

And after that were ordinary public works kept going or started?—No, there was nothing beyond the ordinary maintenance of roads.

Have you had any particular demand for labour on these since?—No, very little.

Did you see any signs of death from privation in Hoshangabad?—No.

In the Betul district?—No. I saw one or two sick people on the roads on one occasion.

Were people drafted to works from poor-houses?—Yes, to some extent.

Did you ever observe in what condition they were, whether fit for work or not?—No, I cannot say I did. They were in very small numbers.

Did you ever have to send people to poor-houses who refused to work or were unfit to work?—Only when they were blind or something of that sort.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—What was the general condition of the workers at the end of the hot weather?—Fairly good.

You referred to an order which gave you authority for refusing to admit able-bodied applicants to certain works. How long was that in force?—About a month.

And was then cancelled?—Yes.

With reference to the modified piece-work rules issued towards the end of the rainy season, did these rules affect the sick or weakly?—Not at all.

Did you experience any difficulty in paying out pice to the people as to their wages?—No, but we had to import fresh supplies of copper to the end.

What percentage did you pay your contractors?—Two and-a-half per cent.

With your experience would you be in favour of closing relief works and putting people on to gratuitous relief in the rainy season?—I would in the black cotton soil plains.

You were referring to the insuperable hardships on works in the rains, and you said that the wage did not seem sufficient. Such being the case, the question is whether you would close the works and put people on the gratuitous relief?—I think I would in the black soil plains, but not elsewhere. I only noticed the lowered condition in the Nerbudda Valley. They did not fall off in other districts.

In the black soil villages you would close it?—Yes.

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(*President.*)—I understand that your system in Hoshangabad was task work with people classed as B and paid about one pice less than the B wage and very little fining, and that the people classed as D were not fined at all, and in Betul you had from the first on two works a system of piece-work or payment by results for the mass of the workers with the B wage as a maximum and no minimum and separate gangs for the weakly paid the D wage without fining?—Yes.

That was the system which you began?—I only took charge in April. I made no changes in the system when I came.

It was that system that was thought to be too attractive?—Yes, that is to say, in the Hoshangabad District.

And to which the orders of May and August, with a view to reducing numbers on works, applied?—Yes.

MR. H. A. CRUMP, Deputy Commissioner, Hoshangabad, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

1. From the records available it appears that the Hoshangabad District had up to 1896-97 enjoyed a comparative immunity from famine. From the answers to questions of the last Famine Commission I find that there have been six heavy failures of crops of which more or less details are known, *viz.*:—

1771	.	Due to war and political disturbances.
1783	.	Ditto ditto.
1803	.	War and failure of rains.
1809	.	Pindaris.
1832	.	Blight.
1877-78	.	Do.

As the late Settlement Officer remarks in his preliminary report on the assessment of the Hoshangabad Tahsil, "the heavy rains of January 1878 resulted in the wheat crop being attacked by blight, and hence there was some distress. It has left little mark upon this district, but some few malguzars and tenants trace their indebtedness to losses suffered that year. It will thus be seen that the Hoshangabad Tahsil, owing to the uniformity of the rainfall and the character of the soil, is practically safe from famine except under a succession of extraordinarily bad years."

These remarks apply equally to the other tahsils of the district, except that in Sohagpur, owing to the inferiority of the soil, the density of the population, and the larger proportion of inferior cultivating classes, as Mr. Sly, the late Settlement Officer remarks, the risk of famine is a little greater. This comparative immunity from any long series of bad harvests has induced a high standard of comfort, and the special enquiries made in 1889 showed the average net annual expenditure of a tenant was from ₹150 to ₹200 per annum. It has, however, at the same time increased the willingness of the money lenders to advance money on the security of landed property and made the tenants rely more on their aid both for seed grain and food during the period when the crops are maturing. The effect of this in ordinary years is not noticeable. The tenant practically banks with his sowkar. He makes his crops over to him and draws on him for the seed grain, cash and food-grain he requires and the account works out fairly even.

The series of bad harvests, which led up to the present famine, however, show the danger of the system. The money lenders continued to make advances to the tenants, who were each year able to repay less and less. Their credit became exhausted as bad crops succeeded bad crops. The smaller malguzars and sowkars became involved, as they were unable to recover the loans that they had made, and were thus no longer able to continue the aid on which the agriculturists had learned to depend. The agriculturists were compelled to lower their standard of comfort, and had to do their field work themselves instead of employing the agricultural labourers who were dependent upon them for their livelihood.

The conditions described in paragraph 109 of the Famine Commission Report of 1878-79 were produced, and even had there been no failure of the monsoon in 1896, there would probably have been some distress among the labouring classes in the cold weather of 1896-97, until the spring crops, the only important crops in this district, were ripe.

The failure of the monsoon considerably increased the numbers affected, as the credit of the smaller tenants was still further reduced. The demand for grain for export to other parts of India in August and September 1896 raised the prices of all food-grains, and the holders of stocks found it more profitable to sell for cash than to increase their advances outstanding, and the cultivating classes were thus compelled to trust to the outturn of the small area sown with autumn crops for their support until the spring crops should ripen.

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2. The effect of this combination of circumstances was to render measures for the relief of distress of a large percentage of the ordinary labourers, of the smaller artizans, and petty cultivators necessary. It is difficult to estimate the exact percentage of the total population which required relief, owing to the influx of persons of the same class from Bhopal; an attempt was made to ascertain the proportion of foreigners in the district in receipt of relief, but the figures are not to be relied upon, as it was found impossible to induce the immigrants to admit that they did not belong to British India, so afraid were they that they would be refused relief.

On the whole, I do not consider that any portion of the persons relieved were really not in need of it. On the other hand, in the hill tracts inhabited entirely by Gonds and Korkus the numbers relieved were insufficient. This was entirely due to the character of the people themselves. Minor roadworks were opened in these tracts for their benefit by the Forest Department, but it was found impossible to persuade the people to leave their villages and come to the work. All food products of the forest and other minor produce were given to them free and the rates for bamboos and bamboo articles were reduced in their favour. There was, however, undoubtedly distress among them, especially towards the end of the monsoon, when a large proportion had to be brought on village relief. To have insisted on their removal to relief works would have been almost impossible, and would have resulted in the complete failure of their autumn crops on which they are entirely dependent for support during a large part of the year. Theirs was the only case in which gratuitous relief was given to persons who could do a reasonable amount of work.

3. The mortality during the famine has been considerably in excess of the normal during the months of May, June, July, August, September and October. In May and June this was partly due to an epidemic of cholera, and July, August, September and October to an epidemic of fever.

At the end of May a change was made in the system in force on relief works, by which the numbers were considerably reduced during June. The exact details of the change will be given in discussing the system of relief works. It affected only the able-bodied and I do not consider it was in any way the cause of the increased mortality, for the special enquiries showed that this mortality was almost entirely confined to children under 5 and adults over 50, two classes the relief of which was unchanged. The monsoon season was an unusually unhealthy one and the epidemic of fever was found to have affected all classes alike and was not confined to those classes who needed relief. I do not consider that it could have been prevented by more extensive relief measures.

4. The measures of relief adopted in this district may be classed as follows:—

A.—Relief Works—

(*a*) Large works under Public Works Department.
(*b*) Small works under Civil authorities.
(*c*) Works carried out by private individuals with the aid of Government loans.

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B.—Village relief in the homes of the people.
C.—Gratuitous relief in poor-houses.
D.—Relief centres.
E.—Kitchens.
F.—Loans to agriculturists.
G.—Suspension of rents and revenue.
H.—The free grant of minor forest produce.
I.—Relief from the Charitable Relief Fund.

I will deal with them in the above order.

A.—Relief Works.

(a)—Large Relief Works.

1. At the commencement of the famine the Deputy Commissioner was made responsible for the management of relief works, the Sub-Divisional Officer of the Public Works Department being placed under his immediate orders. *Vide* Chief Engineer's Office No. 270—6673 of 24th October 1896.

No detailed rules for their management are given in the Famine Code, and a system of working had to be devised as experience was gained. The rules which were thus developed in this district in consultation with the Commissioner, were ultimately adopted for small works under the Civil authorities, and will be found in Revenue Secretariat Circular Letter No. 559 of 29th January 1897.

The principal flaw in these rules was that the establishment was insufficient for the management of large works. They were, however, superseded in the middle of January by the transfer of all road works to the Public Works Department under paragraph 50 of the Famine Code and the issue of the rules in G. O. No. C-498 of 26th December 1896. By these rules the Executive Engineer became responsible for the management of all large relief works, the Deputy Commissioner's duty being—

(1) To fix the task in consultation with the Sub-Divisional Officer . . . paragraph 25
(2) To fix the wage . . . . „ 31
(3) To decide on the necessity of hutting „ 57

The Deputy Commissioner was also required to give aid in making drafts, paragraph 6, and in providing coin, paragraph 46 of the Order.

The object of this change was to enable the Deputy Commissioner to devote greater attention to other forms of relief, *vide* Revenue Secretariat letter No. 214 of 15th January 1897, but at the same time it was distinctly declared that he remained responsible for the general conduct of all famine relief operations in his district, and was expected to bring to the notice of the Public Works Department authorities any defects that he might observe and to do his utmost to get those defects remedied as soon as possible. Revenue Circular letter No. C-74-95 of 15th January 1897.

2. This transfer of management was a wise one. It is clearly a waste of power not to utilise the staff of the Public Works Department to the fullest extent, in times of famine, when expenditure on ordinary Public Works is curtailed, and, except that the Department is undermanned, all works both great and small might be placed under their charge.

All details of management of the camps such as payment of labour, conservancy, kitchens, etc., should be entrusted to them, as it is undesirable to have the officer-in-charge of a camp subject to two masters. At the same time the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner must remain responsible for all details of relief in the works under their charge and should have full power to interfere in cases of necessity. It is impossible to separate the various forms of relief from each other, and it is essential that there should be one controlling authority able to watch the effect of any order issued in connection with any system of relief, and empowered to take immediate action to guard against any part of the system not taking its fair share in the prevention of distress. The raising of the task or excessive fining of the workers might cause a stampede from the work and seriously increase the distress of the district, or without doing this the detailed inspection of village relief by the famine officers under the Deputy Commissioner might show that the conditions of relief works were so stringent that people wandered in search of food rather than go to them. This would only be known to the Deputy Commissioner, as head of all famine relief operations, and interference in the management of relief works would be necessary.

My relations with the Public Works Department have always been friendly, and I seldom found any occasion to interfere, but at the same time the power of issuing orders to which effect must at once be given by the Public Works Department must be vested in the Deputy Commissioner, a power which he should not delegate to any of his Assistants.

3. The system introduced by G. O. No. C-498 was one of pure task-work by which the workers earned the famine wage if they did the full task, but could never be fined below the penal wage. It was strictly in accordance with the Famine Code except in the following points:—

(1) Classifications of workers. By paragraph 15 of the order the division of workers into four classes, A, B, C, and D, of paragraph 52 of the Famine Code was abandoned and two classes only, B and D, were nominally adopted. Subsequently the A class was again introduced to include mates and other special workers who really form part of the establishment.

Now according to the Famine Code the wage of a man or woman of class B or D is fixed without regard to the class of work exacted. It is supposed to be based on the amount of food required to maintain a worker of that class in good condition.

The wage table, Appendix VIII of G. O. No. C-498, divided the workers not according to class but according to the nature of the work done.

Thus an adult female of class C would, under the Famine Code, receive the equivalent of 15 chattaks of grain whether she were a digger or a carrier, but as all females on earthworks were carriers she received, under the wage table in G. O. No. C-498, the equivalent of 13 chattaks of grain only, calculated to the nearest pice.

This system is advocated by Mr. Higham in his recommendations, but I doubt if the system is a sound one. Stress is laid by him on the fact that the earnings of a family may be taken into account, but this overlooks the presence on our relief works of many women deserted by their husbands and having to support themselves. It would be impossible to adopt a special wage for such cases, and in order to prevent distress the wage must be calculated for the individual.

The customary daily wages in this district in ordinary years for casual labour are:—

Man	.	.	36 chattaks of grain.	
Woman	.	.	27 „	of „
Boy	.	.	18 „	of „

These wages include a surplus for repairs of houses, purchase of clothing and utensils and a provision for non-working dependents, and days on which work is not procurable.

The famine wage should, however, be fixed so as to provide only subsistence for the individual for the day, with a small surplus over for the provision of clothing. One great cause of discomfort and ill health on our relief works was the want of clothing, and the fact that the subsistence wage should be sufficient to allow of the purchase of a dhoti occasionally appears to have been lost sight of.

For purposes of returns and statements the workers should be divided into five classes:—

A, Special (including quarry men).
B, Diggers and stone-breakers.
C, Carriers (including children over 12 years of age).
D, Infirm gang.
E, Children (7 to 12 years of age).

The wages of men of the *A* class cannot be fixed. These are really part of the establishment and must be paid sufficient to secure the services of competent men. Class *B* will consist of men only on an earthwork charge, but will include also able-bodied women, if the work is stone-breaking. Class *C* on an earthwork charge will include able-bodied women and children over 12, but on a stone-breaking charge will consist principally of children over 12. For the purposes of wage these two classes may be taken together, and I would propose the following scale:—

Men, the equivalent of 19 chattaks.
Women and children over 12, the equivalent of 14 chattaks.

The infirm gang, class D, might receive, both men and women, the equivalent of 14 chattaks. The difference between 13 and 14 chattaks, when turned into a daily wage is so small that it may be neglected, and the accounts thus simplified. Details, however, of the number of infirm on

each work must be kept, as they afford a valuable guide to the Deputy Commissioner, who is thus able to judge of the condition of the people and the efficiency of Village Relief.

(2) The second departure from the Famine Code is contained in paragraph 31 of G. O. No. C-498. By the Famine Code the money wage changes automatically with the price of food-grains, but the G. O. lays down that when once fixed, the wage shall not be altered except for a variation of 10 per cent. in the price of grain, and then only with the approval of the Commissioner: in it also the wage is calculated to the nearest pice.

The effect of these combined rules was that the wages on the relief works were below those of the Famine Code, for the wages were originally fixed when grain was at 10 seers to the rupee and were left unaltered, because the majority of the workers appeared to be in good condition. Owing to the abundant supply of mohwa, at cheap rates, the people used this more largely than usual as an article of food, and I have some doubts whether their condition was really so satisfactory as it seemed. A large proportion were badly in need of clothes and these had to be supplied to them from the Charitable Relief Fund, instead of being purchased out of their earnings. I should therefore prefer to see the scale of wages calculated to the nearest pice and varied strictly according to the price of grain on the date of payment.

4. This system of pure task-work continued in force until June when, owing to the large number of workers and the difficulty found in getting the land prepared for ploughing, a change of system was adopted.

The able-bodied labourers were given an advance of 3 days' pay and sent to their homes, and task-works were closed to the admission of any applicant not showing signs of distress, the able-bodied being referred to piece-works, which were now opened.

The Central Provinces Famine Code provides for no system of piece-work, and all systems tried in this district were a departure from the Code.

On all works, except one, the contract system was adopted. The workers were made over to a contractor, who was paid a high rate for all work done, the rate at which he paid the labourers being fixed.

The system was a failure, complaints became frequent, and owing to the want of any close check on the measurements and payments, it was impossible to ascertain the real truth of the complaints. To keep a contractor and maintain the establishment required to guard against the cheating of the labourers by the contractor's underlings, would have been too expensive and the system had finally to be abandoned.

Piece-work by direct agency was a success and no complaints were made about it.

The earnings of many of the workers, however, proved too great, and it was finally abandoned for a modified form of task-work.

Under this system the able-bodied were paid the Famine wage, if they performed a full task, but no minimum wage was fixed. There was thus no limit to the fines. This system answered its purpose, and the loafers, who were contented with a penal wage, were eliminated.

With a careful classification of the workers, this system for the able-bodied, and pure task work for the weakly, appear to me the best forms of relief works. But proper classification is essential to its success, and it was found impossible to trust this to the Officers-in-charge. These men were drawn from the class of aspirants to Naib-Tahsildarships. Well-educated and suited for clerkships; they were as a rule wanting in power of control and organisation. They required constant guiding, which the Sub-Divisional Officers of the Public Works Department were hardly qualified to give. The Executive Engineer's charge was too large to enable him to exercise as close a control as was required, and extra European staff could have been employed with advantage. Had he had the assistance of two European Staff Corps Officers as Inspectors, the relief given by relief-works would have been more efficient, and the malversation, which, according to popular rumour, was considerable, would have been detected, if it existed. The necessity and value of such appointments is mentioned in paragraph 33 of Mr. Higham's Note on Famine Relief Works in the North-West Provinces, and frequent European Inspection is essential for efficient Famine Relief, as the permanent and trustworthy native staff is fully employed in other ways.

(b) Small works.

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The only small work in the district was the Sobhapur Tank employing from 1,000 to 2,000 persons. The system of working adopted was that described in Revenue Circular No. 559 of 29th January 1897. A second tank built from a famine loan by an estate under the Court of Wards was managed on the same principles and was practically also a small relief-work under the Civil authorities, the only difference being the source from which funds were supplied. The great advantage of works of this class is that close supervision is possible. All the workers are collected in a small space under the eye of the Officer-in-charge, and a fuller task can thus be exacted.

Both these works were kept under close European supervision as the Famine Relief Officer of the Tahsil frequently visited them.

(c) Works by Famine Loans.

A vigorous attempt was made to induce both small and large landholders to take loans free of any interest from Government, and to employ local labour in improvement of their lands. The people were only too willing to accept the money, but it soon became apparent that only a very few really intended to employ any labour or do any work at all. The system had therefore to be abandoned. This was because improvements were unnecessary. There is hardly a village in the district where labour could not profitably be spent in damming nalas that damage fields or in other ways, but the tenants are too lazy and the ordinary outturn of the land is too great to render them willing to go to the trouble of making even those improvements of which they admit the value.

B.—Village Relief.

1. In ordinary years local charity is amply sufficient to support the aged and crippled poor of the village, but when the cultivators are themselves pressed for food, it is hopeless to expect them to give much aid to others.

Except in the case of the hill tribes during the monsoon all the persons relieved in their homes under Chapter V of the Famine Code were unfit for labour on the relief works, and had, as a rule, no able-bodied relatives. In some cases, however, relief was given to persons entitled to it by their physical condition, although they had able-bodied relatives. It is not desirable to drive on to relief works small cultivators just able to support themselves in their homes. They have to arrange for the tilling of their land. The refusal of relief to their aged dependents would interfere with the cultivation of the land, a matter which must not be lost sight of. With this exception, the provisions of article 34 of the Famine Code were strictly followed as a test of the right to village relief. Gratuitous relief at home was thankfully accepted by the classes relieved, though occasionally persons refuse to take it. In some cases persons not otherwise entitled to it attempted to obtain relief, but such was the exception and not the rule, and I think that the difficulty of discriminating between the worthy and unworthy is over-rated.

2. The system requires a strong staff, but in this district, with its Patwaris and Revenue Inspectors already available, the increase was trifling. As far as possible the actual distribution of the money day by day to the persons selected by the Circle Inspectors was placed in the hands of the head man of the village, who kept the accounts with the aid of the patwari.

Local opinion and the knowledge that everything that happens in a small village is well known, was an efficient check on malversation and very few rumours of fraud reached me.

Each Circle Inspector had on an average 70 villages, each of which he was expected to visit once a fortnight when he checked the accounts, recouped the permanent advance and made such changes as were necessary in the list of recipients.

A European officer was placed over every six Circles, who checked the work of the Inspectors and the distribution of relief. The system worked on the whole well and the staff at my disposal was sufficient.

3. Central kitchens could not replace gratuitous relief at the homes of the people as many of the recipients were, owing to old age, blindness, etc., unable to move long distances, and it would have been necessary to collect them permanently at the kitchens. When the famine ended

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they would have lost touch with the people who used to support them, and their existence would have been rendered more difficult. By keeping them in their homes the village was made to realise that they still belonged to it, and many of them no doubt even during the famine received something from the villagers as a supplement to the subsistence allowance paid by Government.

C.—Poor-houses.

1. People of the better castes objected strongly to detention in the poor-house, and the main population always consisted of the blind and deformed, and low caste professional beggars. Owing to the long border which this district shares with Bhopal, the poor-houses were from time to time flooded with paupers from that State.

Besides these, occasional wanderers from other districts were sent in by the police, as well as wanderers of the Hoshangabad District pending their transfer to their homes.

The poor-house population therefore consisted mainly of people in poor condition and it was not surprising that the mortality should be high.

2. The poor-house ration was sufficient for the stronger people, but was unsuited to the large number who were in hospital. For these a special diet had to be adopted.

The rules and appendices of the Famine Code are by no means explicit and were practically abandoned in many points. Full particulars of the changes required have been given in the report of the Hoshangabad Divisional Conference, held at Chhindwara on the 18th February, and I need hardly repeat them here.

3. The main difficulty was to induce the people to leave the poor-house and go to their homes. The professional beggar and the low caste people found the lazy life in the poor-house, even when they only received the minimum ration, so comfortable that they returned again and again.

An attempt was made to get work from the inmates, but I cannot say with any success. They were employed to grind the grain used for food, and to keep the place tidy, but no regular industries proved possible.

4. In many cases persons found begging had to be compelled to go to the poor-house and were forcibly detained there, though no legal authority for such action existed. It does not seem to me that any legal powers sanctioning such a course are necessary.

D.—Relief Centres.

1. At every police post and relief-work a kitchen was opened for the relief of wanderers. At the police posts they received only one or two meals as a rule and were then passed on to the poor-house or nearest relief-work. At the relief-work kitchens they received food until they were fit for work, but no person was supposed to be kept at a relief-work kitchen unless he was likely to be fit for work within 15 days.

Relief centres did not replace gratuitous relief at the homes of the people, except that the opportunity was taken of their existence to feed all children at them who liked to attend.

E.—Relief-kitchens.

1. On relief-works it is desirable to give relief to dependents both young and old in the form of cooked food. It ensures the children especially receiving proper meals, for my experience is that the parents cannot be trusted in time of famine to feed them properly while earning famine wages on a relief-work. These kitchens no doubt require considerable supervision. In this district they were placed under the Public Works Department, and every effort was made to prevent embezzlement, but there was no doubt considerable malversation, which could only be prevented by frequent inspection, a thing for which the Public Works Staff was insufficient.

F.—Loans to Cultivators and Landholders.

I have already mentioned in connection with my remarks on small works, that the system of loans to cultivators and landholders for land improvements proved a failure as a means of providing relief to labourers. In cases where the loans were made to cultivators, the money was generally applied either to the support of themselves and their families or more rarely to the repayment of debts.

In this way the loans became loans made for subsistence, and as such no doubt did good.

2. Loans made with this avowed object were not issued, and the experiment would be dangerous, as it would be most difficult to discriminate between the worthy and unworthy.

3. Loans were freely advanced to tenants and malguzars for seed-grain and purchase of cattle, and were made repayable in two years. Without such assistance much of the land must have remained unsown. Care was taken only to advance money to such tenants as would have been unable to obtain seed-grain elsewhere, and the principle that the sowkars must always be the main source of supply of seed-grain was maintained.

Considering that almost all agriculture in this district is carried on with borrowed grain both for seed and food, it matters little, so far as the indebtedness of the cultivator is concerned, whether the advance comes from Government or not.

G.—Suspension of Land Revenue.

An enquiry was made into the probable out-turn of all the principal crops of the district by means of crop experiments in carefully selected fields, and the information thus acquired was made the basis of proposals for the suspension of revenue.

Suspension of revenue under the Rent Law of these Provinces disables the malguzar from suing the tenant for the same proportion of the rent, and although the relations of malguzar and tenant were carefully watched, no case came to my notice in which the relief granted to the malguzar did not reach the tenant. The effect of this suspension of rent was to leave the tenant a portion of his crops for his support and thus enable him to look after his cattle and prepare his land for sowing. It also prevented unscrupulous malguzars from bringing pressure on their tenants and checked any tendency there might have been for tenants to throw up their holdings.

H.—Government Forests.

Full use was made of the Government forests as a means of supplying work and food. All roots and fruits found in them were given free, and labourers were allowed to remove head loads of grass, leaves and firewood for sale free of charge. They proved a most valuable auxiliary relief, and full use was made of them.

(*President.*)—When did you take charge of Hoshangabad?—On the 4th December 1895.

And have you been there ever since?—Yes.

(*Mr. Higham.*)—As regards your remarks on classification, you approve of the proposal to classify workers as diggers and carriers?—Yes.

I understand the objection you make to these proposals is that the carriers will only receive 13 chattaks of grain?—Yes.

If they received 14 chattaks you accept that as the best arrangement?—Yes.

Do you think any difference should be made between the wages given to a man and woman who are both doing carrying work?—No.

As regards the second departure from the Famine Code, did you never raise your wages as prices varied?—We did towards the end. We raised them in August. Up to July they were 7 pice and 6 pice; in August we raised them to 8 and 7.

What were grain prices?—Nine, 8½, 8¼, 8.

All the time it was from 8 to 9 you paid the same?—So long as it was between 9 and 8 seers we kept to 7 and 6 pice for men and women respectively.

Then during May and June people were really living on something less than 19 chattaks?—A little less than the Code, that was because they were living largely on mahua, the price of which was considerably less than grain.

Do you think you were able to keep them up to condition on the wage?—Up to June there was no falling off. At the end of the first month of the monsoons their condition fell. Whether it was due to exposure it would be difficult to say.

How long did mahua last?—Mahua lasted to the end of the rains.

I suppose they ate it as an ordinary article of food more than usual?—Yes.

Piece-work was introduced to a certain extent in May ?—Yes, as follows :

Fortnight ending	Total.	Piece-work.	Task-work.
15th May	52,512	...	52,512
31st ,, ...	45,855	531	45,324
15th June	28,449	7,696	20,753
30th ,, ...	20,438	5,886	14,552
15th July	26,540	4,453	22,087
31st ,, ...	34,024	4,376	29,648
15th August . . .	32,649	4,579	28,070
31st ,, ...	29,576	11,699	17,877
15th September . . .	26,341	13,533	12,808
30th ,, . . .	21,273	11,482	9,791
15th October . . .	12,464	5,372	7,092
31st ,, . . .	1,412	...	1,412

It appears from this that you began piece-work on 31st May ?—Yes.

And on the 15th June you had a quarter of the total on piece work ?—Yes.

That proportion was kept up to July ?—Yes, till the 15th of July. Orders were issued in July that owing to the rains not having begun we were to stop converting task into piece-work.

There was a great drop from the 31st May to the 30th June. Was that due to special orders ?—On the 25th May people had not begun to plough their land, and malguzars were complaining that people were not attending to cultivation. We decided to temporarily turn off our able-bodied men in order to cultivate their land.

You were apparently not satisfied with the piecework carried out by contractors ?—No.

Did you receive complaints that people did not get a fair amount ?—Complaints were received about measurements on work. Payments were not made by measurement at all, and people were complaining that they were not being paid their full amount. The contractors said the pits were not dug deep enough.

Did you or the Public Works staff investigate that ?—I did, but it is impossible to get at the size of a pit; you come to the work and people point out a pit which in the rains is half full of water.

What about piece-work by direct agency ?—I have had no complaints about it. I think it was a success.

Was it more satisfactory than task-work ?—Much more for able-bodied workers.

Did you receive any complaints from these workers ?—No.

Do you think the earnings were too great ?—Yes.

Did you make any notes as to the earnings ?—Some of them earned 5 and 6 annas a day.

They were the ordinary labouring class ?—They were accustomed to the work; it was stone-breaking.

Were they men who were always employed on stone-breaking ?—Men who lived in the neighbourhood of provincial metalled roads generally.

Did you question them as to how long they continued to earn this wage. Is it posssible they only earned it for a short time and then used their earnings for their support for a time ?—I did not go into the question.

In August you began work on the payment by results system. Under that system they could not earn more than 14 chattaks ?—No.

Did you approve of that limit ?—At that special time, yes. I don't think it would do for the whole period of the famine. At the end of August numbers steadily fell as people were leaving the works to go to their homes in order to attend to the kharif crop. The only object of these orders was to induce more people to go.

On the 15th August you had 4,579 piece-workers and 28,070 task-workers, on the 31st August you had 11,699 piece-workers and 18,000 task-workers. How do you account for the sudden difference in the proportion of piece-workers ?—At the beginning of July orders had issued to temporarily stop the transfer of workers from task-work to piece-work, and to continue admitting men to task-work. The result was that on the 15th August the 28,070 task-workers included a large proportion of able-bodied persons. Orders then issued to introduce the payment by results system, and the officers in charge transferred a large number of able-bodied persons and some infirm workers to this class of work, the piece-workers of 31st August are not real piece-workers but workers paid by results.

(*President.*)—You say in the first paragraph of your written note that this comparative immunity from any long series of bad harvests has induced a high standard of comfort. When did you first notice distress of a kind which, in your opinion, called for relief under the Code ?—About the end of September 1896.

You say in the same paragraph even had there been no failure of the monsoon in 1896, there would probably have been some distress. It did not occur to you in 1895 or the early part of 1896, that any measures were necessary ?—No. The spring crops of 1896 were fair, not good, but equal to the average of previous years.

You did not notice any increase of beggars or any emaciated people about in the spring of 1896 ?—There were a few, mostly wanderers, from Bhopal and Rewa.

If you had to manage the district again in a similar concatenation of circumstances, would you start relief earlier and if so, how much earlier ?—The only thing I would do, would be to start poor-houses early in order to deal with starving wanderers. In this district we had a certain number of starving beggars from Bhopal. As a matter of fact we did start a sort of private poor-house. I don't think any other measures were wanted. The maximum number in our poor-houses in the rains of 1896 was 75.

You say in paragraph 2 that "on the whole I do not consider that any portion of the persons relieved were really not in need of it." On the other hand, I think we have had some witnesses who said that they considered that a great many persons were on works who were not in need of relief. I see from letters that that impression seems to prevail. As you hold a different opinion apparently, I want to know how that impression got abroad. How do you account for it ?—I don't quite see how to account for it.

With reference to the high mortality from May to October, you mention the prevalence of cholera and epidemic fever. Do you think there was any general low condition due to privation which made these epidemics more fatal than they would otherwise have been ?—In the case of fever, no. In the case of cholera I am not quite certain. In the case of fever we had a special enquiry into all deaths during the monsoon, and the percentage of deaths among well-to-do and poorer classes was about the same.

You say in paragraph 3, "I do not consider the change of system was in any way the cause of the increased mortality, for the special enquiries showed that this mortality was almost entirely confined to children under 5 and adults over 50." With reference to that, is it not the case that when a large body of able-bodied persons left the works, the old people and children who were their dependents, would practically leave too ?—Yes.

I see in paragraph 4 under the head "Relief works" you say in June owing to the large number of workers and the difficulty found in getting the land prepared for ploughing, a change of system was adopted. I noticed in some correspondence allusion to this same difficulty. How was that brought to notice. By malguzars ?—No. It was brought to notice by my own observation, and by the reports of famine relief officers.

Do you mean that the malguzars had begun to complain ?—No. We observed on the 22nd of May that cultivators had not begun to plough their land.

Mr. White says in his evidence that the reason was that malguzars were not offering ploughmen a living wage. Do you think that's true ?—No. I don't think it was true then. It was true about September. At that time it was said the malguzars were willing to pay double the ordinary rates, but as they had treated their ploughmen dishonestly the year before, having turned their regular men off without wages, the men refused to return to them.

Were they annual farm-servants ?—Yes.

Do you think it would be possible to carry on in another famine a number of small works under the supervision of

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civil agency?—I don't think it would be possible to find the work to do.

You could not get many tanks?—No.

You say under the head of "B. village relief" gratuitous relief at home was thankfully accepted by the classes relieved, though occasionally persons refused to take it. What were the motives in this case?—Caste prejudice. One of the lower castes of *Pasis* almost entirely refused to take gratuitous relief.

It has been proposed that in case of a future famine the main form of relief should be a few large works under the Public Works Department. The difficulty is that there are certain classes who find it very difficult to leave their homes, such as cultivators, and people who own cattle, or people who have sick dependents, or small children. Do you think that with a strong inspecting agency you could, at the same time that you made a list of these people for gratuitous relief, also make a list of these people and admit them to small works in the village circle, thus enabling you to order the rest of the people, that is landless labourers, off to large works?—No, because at that time the landless class has probably started to move away from their homes to look for work. In Hoshangabad there is a regular system of going to Nimar to look for work. They would be absent from their homes, and the circle agency would never pick them up.

These classes would be ordered to distant relief works, and those who have a reasonable objection to going to distant works would be brought on to a list and allowed relief on small works near their villages. The others would be ordered to big works and have to live on them?—Of course it would be possible to prepare such a list, but I am very doubtful whether the remaining people would go to distant relief works.

Do you think they would sit and starve in their villages instead?—I think they would wander about and beg.

Practically they would be driven to small works?—Yes, or they would wait till they got into such a condition that they would have to be admitted into poor-houses.

On the works at Hoshangabad had you a large proportion of small tenants?—I have no statistics, but from my impression there must have been about 30 per cent. A family would keep one or two men to look after the land and send the rest to relief works.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Can you tell me when relief works were actually opened in the district?—Test-works under the District Council were opened about the middle of November, and relief works were opened about 1st December.

How many works were opened?—Two at Babai Bagra, 3rd December; Piparya Sandya, 1st December, split into three charges; Itansi Dhar, 16th January; Harda Handia, 18th January.

Were these works managed by you or the Public Works Department?—At first by me.

Till when?—The orders for Public Works Department to take them over came on 1st January, and we made over the works about 17th January.

Did they all fill rapidly?—All, except one.

So that there was evidence that there was considerable demand for labour in the district?—Yes, that is to say, that at that time we considered a work filled up, if it had 3,000, and then we split up the works.

The mortality in September, October, November and December 1896 was considerably in excess of the average. What was that due to?—Monsoon fever. The mortality in these months is always high.

You don't connect that mortality with distress?—No. The total death-rate for 1896 was 44 per mille per annum. That is below 1895 and slightly above 1894.

As regards the high mortality in the autumn months of 1897. Is that in any way connected with famine conditions?—I should say it was probably due to normal conditions. The monsoon was delayed.

When did you start village relief, was it behind-hand in being started?—No. The people were managing fairly well.

You don't think it was behind-hand then?—If I had to start it again I should start it earlier, not for the sake of the people themselves so much as for the sake of relieving the villagers who have ordinarily to support them. We had a definite enquiry into the state of these people. We should have started it earlier, but found the villagers were supporting them already. Then, again, there is almost always a certain amount of labour while the *rabi* crops are ripening, which the weaker people can get.

With reference to what you say about raising the task, did you ever have any trouble with the Public Works as to raising the task?—No.

You say in paragraph 3 that A, B, C and D of paragraph 52 of the Famine Code was abandoned, and two classes only, B and D, were nominally adopted. What is the meaning of nominally?—The explanation is in the next paragraph of my note.

I understand people were in B and D?—Yes, but B was not necessarily getting the B wage of the Famine Code.

Why?—Under the Famine Code a B woman would be paid R0-1-8, under the Public Works Code R0-1-1.

That was merely due to the use of the piece system?—It is due to the wages being calculated according to whether they were carriers or diggers. An able-bodied woman would be classed as B. If a carrier she would get the D wage on earthwork, but on stone-work, if able-bodied, she would get the B wage.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—As regards the hill tribes in your district, what is their condition in an average year?—From the end of the monsoon to the end of the *rabi* harvests they live upon the produce of their *baris*; from the beginning of the spring harvest up to the monsoon they live on their earnings for cutting crops. During the monsoons their condition is slightly bad. They use the forest produce.

What are the crops?—Maize, kodo.

It is not exported?—No.

The produce of their crops does not suffice for the whole year?—No.

This being their condition, do you think the ordinary relief rules should be relaxed in their case?—I think it is impossible to persuade the Gonds to come to relief works. They won't leave the jungles.

You have said what special measures were adopted. Have you any other suggestions as to how they should be relieved, short of giving them gratuitous relief at their homes?—During the open season we had a certain number of Gonds maintained by the Forest Department; that was only close to their villages.

Do the contractors employ ordinary Public Works Department men or new men?—The ordinary men.

They did not give satisfaction?—I don't think so. I am unable to discover whether the complaints of labourers were correct or not.

With the departmental system there were similar complaints?—There were, but then it was possible to discover the real facts.

(*Mr. Fuller.*)—I suppose there is a certain difference of position among the Gonds themselves?—Yes.

Would it be possible, or not, to draw up for the Gonds of villages such a list as is drawn up for those ordinarily entitled to gratuitous relief?—The difficulty is in the raiyatwari villages. It would be possible in those regularly settled but not in the forest villages.

For those who live in the special area, such an arrangement would be possible?—Yes.

As regards village relief, I suppose at the beginning you worked strictly under section 34 of the Famine Code?—Yes.

You say you believe there were few persons came to works who did not require relief. The meaning depends on the construction you put on the words "requiring relief." You don't mean that there were any on relief but those in actual want of food?—No.

Have you any information as to the supply of pice in the way of copper coin returning to the treasury. How long did it take to come back?—I should not think it is back yet.

MR. L. K. LAURIE, Commissioner, Nerbudda Division, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

A.—DEPARTURES FROM THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES FAMINE CODE WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN THE RECENT FAMINE IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES.

Test works.

1. By paragraph 13 of the Code, "the proper course is with the first indications of distress to open one or more test works, according as the area which seems affected is large or small, regulating them strictly according to the provisions hereinafter contained as to relief works. Ordinary works in progress under the District Council or required by it should be opened and should be utilized as test works . . . If such tests work attract labourers in large numbers, then it may be considered proved that distress exists."

With regard to the foregoing, I would observe that although test-works were opened in this Division, the dates of opening them by no means coincided with the appearance of the "*first indications of distress.*" Distress among the poorest classes had manifested itself during the rains, and private poor-houses had been opened in Hoshangabad and Narsinghpur. It is difficult to start test works during the rains: and they might compete at sowing time with such demand for agricultural labour as existed. Test works were opened in Narsinghpur and Nimar on the 14th October and in Betul and Chhindwara on the 18th and 21st November (respectively). Reports on the results were slow in coming in, and on the 21st November I decided to open relief works without waiting for reports on the test works. It was by that time plain that distress must exist. The staple food of the poorer classes in this Division is *juari*: and with the cessation of rain at the end of August a large part of the *juari* crop had been ruined. At the same time prices had begun to rise and information as to the harvests elsewhere indicated that we could not depend on imports to correct our local deficiency. The employment for labour afforded by the *juari* harvest and the cutting of the grass crop, in ordinary years, was seriouly disminished: and there was little room for doubt that the labouring class were hit hard by the rising prices of food-grain on the one hand and by the contraction of the field of employment on the other.

The beggars had flocked into the larger towns and wanderers from other districts and from across the Nerbudda had begun to appear. It was therefore determined to open relief works in accordance with the scheme already prepared without further delay. By the 25th December nearly 30,000 persons were on the relief works.

Gratuitous relief.

2. By paragraph 34 of Code, the village Mukaddam, with the assistance of the Patwari, is to prepare a register of persons residing in his village who from their circumstances are likely to require gratuitous relief: and the Commissioner of the Division is to give the order for its preparation when the time appears ripe. Accordingly, on the 27th November, I gave the order for the organization of village relief in all districts except Nimar.* I may here observe that a distinction might hereafter be drawn between ordering the *preparation* of the *Village Register of Poor* and ordering the *commencement of payments* to the persons whose names are on the Register. The Registers can with advantage be prepared a month or so before payments are commenced. It was early seen, however, that the plan of giving relief through the mukaddam in all villages where persons of classes described in paragraph 34 of the Code were to be found could not be worked in tracts—such as the Jagirs of Chhindwara—where mukaddams are illiterate and patwaris are wanting, or where there are few grain shops and the transport of grain is difficult. I therefore obtained, in January, the sanction of the Chief Commissioner to the substitution in such tracts of the place of distributing relief at *selected centres*, instead of in each and every village. At these "distributing centres" relief was given in the form of grain—cooked or uncooked as the recipients preferred—because the people (chiefly Gonds) were not familiar with the value of money. Shelters were erected at each distributing centre so that persons who had far to travel from their homes might (if they chose) take up their temporary residence there. In this way these 'distributing centres' partook of the character of 'relief centres' and 'poor-houses,' both: but the inmates were free to come and go, and were not required to work.

* Orders for Nimar (where distress was limited) issued on 6th February.

3. The Code omits to state whether the payments of money for gratuitous relief are to be made monthly, weekly or daily: but it may be inferred from the reference to "daily expenditure" in clause (*g*) of paragraph 25, that *daily* disbursements are contemplated. This was the principle adopted in this Division: and I attach some importance to its observance. Among an improvident people the receipt of a whole month's subsistence money in one lump sum is provocative of extravagance and the children (if any) suffer.

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4. The classes of people described in paragraph 34 of the Code as entitled to relief are, broadly speaking, persons who are helpless by reason of age or infirmity (attendants on the sick or on infant children in their homes may be left out of account, as not many are to be found so employed in the homes of the poor). The Code does not seem to contemplate that persons who have been so reduced by privation as to be *temporarily unfit for labour* should be relieved in their homes, although it is true that the words "physical weakness" [in clause (*d*)], would cover such cases. The orders issued in these Provinces at first limited the application of the expression "physical weakness" to the "permanently helpless." Therefore for some time the Village Registers contained only the lame, the halt, the blind, the insane, and the senile. But when the rains came on a new departure was made. Large numbers of labourers refused to stir from their homes dreading exposure on the works, finding it hard to travel distances which were easily covered in the dry weather, and building their hopes on their patches of maize, *samak*, *kodo* or *kutki*. This home staying involved slow starvation, staved off for a little by the consumption of such herbs and roots as were obtainable. It became clearly necessary to save these people, and in August orders were issued that all persons who "looked half-starved" were temporarily to be brought on the Village Relief Registers.

5. By paragraph 36 of the Code the removal of names from the Village Register is entrusted to the Patwari: and nothing is said about the *addition* of names thereto, presumably because it was not contemplated that any additions would be required. It was not deemed safe to leave this matter in the hands of the Patwari. Additions and removals were made by Revenue Inspectors under the supervision of the Relief Officer of the Tahsil or Sub-Division.

6. In this connection it is to be remarked that the Code makes the Tahsildar [paragraph (*b*)], Superintendent of the Relief "Circles" of his tahsil: and leaves it to the Deputy Commissioner to control the supervision of gratuitous relief with his aid. It was found that *European Superintendents* were urgently called for in order to secure punctual payments and timely revision of the village lists. Accordingly the assistance of a certain number of Staff Corps officers was procured by the Local Administration, and other European officers were placed upon special duty for the purpose. One of these special officers was usually placed in charge of a Tahsil—the Tahsildar being set free for other work.

Relief works.

7. By paragraph 48 of the Code, "in the early days of a scarcity small works should be used to the utmost in preference to large works, which will be the backbone of system of relief in the later stages of a famine." The terms 'small works' and 'large works' as used here, are to be interpreted (it is understood) by the light of paragraph 41 preceding—according to which all works that are not calculated to provide simultaneous employment for three months to at least 1,000 persons are *small* works. This principle was not adhered to. In this Division there are few places where tanks can with advantage be made, and experience shows that (until the last two years) the country suffers more from excess of moisture than from drought. On the other hand, it is sadly in want of *good roads*. Road-making was therefore the backbone of our scheme of relief works: and in taking up a particular road at the beginning of the famine attention was paid rather to the intensity of distress in the neighbourhood than to the length of time that a fixed number of workers could be employed on it. When one road was finished it was not difficult to transfer the labourers to an adjoining work of a similar kind. If, however, it had been necessary to decide between taking up small or large works at the outset, preference would, I think, have been given to the large works, because in the hot weather large camps are undesirable in view of the danger of cholera and the difficulties of water-supply.

8. By paragraph 50 of the Code, the official in charge of a relief work "to whatever Department he may belong, will ordinarily be subordinate to the Deputy Commissioner and to him alone" in the conduct of his duties. If, however, the Local Government considers it necessary it can relieve the Deputy Commissioner of the control of any particular work and issue rules for the guidance of the officer in charge. This principle was at first acted upon to this extent that all the relief works in this Division were started under the direct supervision and responsibility of the Deputy Commissioners. Early in January, however, orders were received from the

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Chief Commissioner whereby the "officers in charge" of relief works became Public Works subordinates: and the whole management of the relief works then in operation was transferred to the Pubic Works Department.

9. The classification of workers set forth in paragraph 52 of the Code was discarded in the instructions issued at the time when relief works were placed under the Public Works Department. Almost the whole of the workers on our relief works were persons accustomed to labour of some kind, while very few of them were familiar with stone-breaking or the excavation of earth. Hence the classification could be much simplified; and the principle adopted was to look rather to what kinds of work the workers could (with due regard to their physical fitness) be set to perform, than to what they had been in the custom of doing.

10. By paragraph 57 of the Code, any relief worker who contumaciously refuses to perform his allotted task may be sent to the poor-house. This provision must be read along with paragraph 83, whereby a 'penal' ration is prescribed for persons sent to the poor-house on this account. This method of punishing contumacy was not followed. In the first place, the poor-house was ordinarily at a distance, and the necessary guards for escorting recusants to it were not available. In the second place the 'penal' diet was not found to be a sufficient deterrent. I am informed that an idle person would accept the 'penal' ration as enough for his needs.

11. The 'task' was not settled by the local authorities or strictly in accordance with paragraph 58 of the Code. It was usually determined by the Executive Engineer on the lines indicated in the instructions referred to in paragraph 9 of this note. Ultimately, the task-work system was modified by the partial introduction of *piece-work*. This is a subject to which I need not refer in detail as the Chief Commissioner's orders are on record.

12. By paragraph 60 of the Code the rate of wages is to be adjusted to variations in the price of food by the "Officer in charge." This important duty was transferred to the Public Works Department Sub-Divisional Officer in consultation with the Deputy Commissioner, and subject to the Commissioner's approval.

13. By paragraph 64 of the Code, workers who are not 'able-bodied' are to be paid *daily*. It was not found possible to do this, as a general rule.

14. By paragraph 68 of the Code workers are to receive on Saturday evening wage for Sunday, which is to be a day of rest. It was found that this led to persons joining a work on Saturday in order to secure the Sunday wage: and prepayment was discontinued.

15. In paragraph 88 of the Code, the classes of persons who may be admitted to a poor-house are described. The words "persons who being unfit for employment on works," was interpreted (with reference to the words "until they are fit," in the succeeding paragraph) as including those who were *temporarily* incapacitated for work by privation. In addition to this, however, persons who were *homeless* (such as wandering orphans) and persons whose homes (by reason of their being wanderers from other Divisions, provinces or countries) could not be readily ascertained were received into the poor-houses, if unfit for employment on works.

Poor-houses.

16. Instead of placing the poor-house under the immediate charge of the "Civil relief officer of the Tahsil" as directed in Rule I of Appendix IV of the Code, each such institution was ordinarily in charge of a special officer selected by the Deputy Commissioner, such as an Extra-Assistant Commissioner (at head-quarters) or a Munsiff (at tahsil). The Tahsildar was too much on tour to be able to look after the poor-house; and its due supervision demanded a considerable amount of trouble and time. At first it was found very necessary to have a substantial enclosure wall, the instruction in paragraph II, of Appendix IV, that reliance should be placed on the 'patrol,' proving an impracticable one. But as time went on, the poor-house became more popular, and the difficulty was to keep persons who had been passed out as fit for work from seeking re-admission.

It was not found feasible to enforce the disciplinary rules inculcated in paragraph 13 of Appendix IV, or to provide much employment for the inmates, a large proportion of them being too feeble to be treated otherwise than as convalescents.

The directions regarding the ration in paragraph 12 of Appendix IV, had to be considerably modified in practice, owing to the feeble state of health of most of the persons admitted. In most poor-houses the plan of dividing the ration into *three* instead of *two* meals was tried; and until the health of an inmate improved he was in many cases placed upon special (hospital) diet at the outset, under the instructions of the Civil Surgeon.

17. The Code has no chapter on 'Relief Centres': but there are incidental references in paragraph 33, paragraph 77 and paragraph 123 to circumstances under which starving persons may temporarily receive gratuitous relief until they are fit for work or can reach a relief work or poor-house. In this Division every Police post was made a relief centre in this sense of the word: and on every relief work there was a kitchen at which not only the dependents of workers were fed but applicants for employment who were too weak to work received free meals for a day or two until they recovered strength. In addition, there were in the jagirs of the Chhindwara district the distributing centres referred to in paragraph 2 of this note, which were, however, modifications of the village relief system to suit local conditions.

Relief Centres.

18. The establishment of children's kitchens was not found necessary in this Division until the rains set in, when under the circumstances indicated in paragraph 4 of this note many parents lacked the means of support. Both parents and children were then brought on to Village Relief, and to some extent the issue of food to children in kitchens took the place of money doles to the parents on the children's behalf. Such kitchens, however, were not established in the numbers contemplated by paragraph 97 of the Code. In the monsoon travelling is difficult and exposure to the weather is trying to young children. The kitchens were useful to the children who resided in the towns or villages where these institutions were opened, but children from neighbouring villages did not greatly resort to them. It seemed preferable to adhere to the money dole system in villages not within easy reach of a kitchen, especially as it was not reported that parents were generally in the habit of starving their children. This practice seems to have been, on the whole, confined to relief-works, and I explain it on the ground that people on the works being among strangers were not subject to the pressure of public opinion and were anxious to save all they could in the shortest possible time.

Where kitchens were established the elaborate Rules of Appendix V of the Code were found inappropriate, and the rules appended to the report of the Jabalpur Conference, held on August 2nd, 1897, were generally preferred.

19. From paragraph 107 of the Code read with paragraph 99, it would appear that the intention was that (1) orphan children and (2) children abandoned by their parents should be at first sent to poor-houses or children's kitchens. On the closing of these institutions (at the end of the famine) the children are to be transferred to a "temporary orphanage" at the head-quarters of the district which is to be managed by a local Committee or Board. The principle actually followed was to establish the orphanage as part of the head-quarters' poor-house, while famine was still prevalent, and to institute the necessary enquiries as to parentage, adoption, etc., at once, instead of waiting till the end of the famine. The orphanage was managed by the Superintendent of the Poor-house with the assistance of a matron.

Orphanages.

20. It was not found feasible to give effect to the provisions of paragraphs 101 to 104 of the Code. In applying paragraph 117 the further step was taken of reducing the Forest Department fees on bamboos and articles manufactured therefrom by 50 per cent. The Gonds are in the habit of making and selling bamboo baskets, and they were much helped by this concession.

Other measures of relief.

B.—Degree of success which has attended the measures adopted, considered primarily with regard to the relief of distress and, secondarily, with regard to economy.

21. Of the success of the *relief works* as a means not only of saving life but of keeping labour on the land, there can be no doubt. Every malguzar testifies to it. It may be claimed for them also that they have achieved some advance in the direction of opening up the country by improved roads. Whether they were economically administered is a difficult question to answer. It implies a comparison with the administration of similar works in other places or in other times which it is not within my power to make, I am ready to admit that at the outset, before

labour was properly organized and a due task exacted, there was a considerable expenditure for which there was not much to show. It is also true that at the outset many persons of the cultivating class who were not in immediate need of relief resorted to our works as a means of enabling them to lay by some small savings. I do not, however, consider that money expended in this way was wholly wasted. It helped to avert or postpone the exhaustion of resources which ultimately brought many persons on the village registers of poor as temporarily unfit for work. The proper supervision of relief works so as to guard against the misappropriation of public money and to make sure that the labourers are punctually paid their due wages calls for a larger European staff than was actually available in this Division. At first inspections of relief works were made by Extra-Assistant Commissioners, Police officers and others: but it was found that their criticisms were liable to provoke friction, and it was considered desirable to limit their action in this respect. Executive Engineers had such large areas to control that their inspections were necessarily few: and a great deal of responsibility thus rested in the hands of Sub-Divisional Officers. Even these officers were unable to give that close attention to their charges which circumstances demanded.

22. The administration of *Village Relief*, on the other hand, was very effectively supervised in all districts except perhaps Betul, where at the beginning, owing to the inexperience and ill-health of the District Officer, arrangements were defective. With the appointment of special officers after the rains had broken the deficiencies were remedied and the organization made complete.

The bringing upon Village Relief in the rains of all the persons referred to in the closing portion of paragraph 4 of this note, involved a very considerable outlay of public money: but I doubt if the people could have been kept alive in any other way. The extension of relief works at that season was impossible even if the people would have come upon them: and the work done on roads in rainy weather is of a spasmodic kind, and (except where skilled labour is employed) of a not very satisfactory description.

23. The *Relief centres* in use in this Division (as described in paragraph 17 of this note) were I believe of excellent service in keeping down the mortality induced by wandering. By insisting on the police filing receipts for all persons forwarded to relief works of poor-houses as vouchers for their expenditure, some check was imposed upon the outlay incurred.

24. As to *children's kitchens* I have given reasons for holding that their range of usefulness was limited (paragraph 18 of this note). In the report of the Divisional Conference on the amendment of the Provincial Famine Code will be found reasons for doubting the economic character of this method of dispensing relief in places where the management of the kitchens must be left much in the hands of Malguzars, Mukhtiars, or village Schoolmasters.

25. With regard to *Poor-houses*, one's satisfaction at the manner in which most of these institutions were managed in this Division is greatly discounted by the considerable mortality among the inmates, despite the great regard paid to all considerations of health and notwithstanding the unstinted expenditure on dietary in the case of all who were in hospital. The facts seem to me to point to the conclusion that the shutting up in poor-houses of persons in indifferent health does not tend to their recovery: and that the aggregation of a considerable number of people within an enclosure operates in some occult way to depress vitality. The class relieved in our poor-houses were mainly beggars and 'tramps.' On the other hand, the children placed in the orphanages thrived greatly; until *cancrum oris* or *stomatatis* appeared among them. Even then, prompt isolation of the infected cases proved effective in protecting the health of the remainder.

Still, whatever may be urged against poor-houses, it must be admitted that (*a*) they were the means of restoring a considerable number of persons to health, who were transferred from the poor-house to relief-works; that (*b*) many other persons were restored, in health, to their villages at the close of the famine; and that (*c*) they were absolutely necessary as depôts for the foreigners (unfit for labour) who came so numerously across our borders. Moreover, poor houses act as indicators, on the one hand, of the efficacy of Village Relief (in respect to residents of the district seeking admission), and on the other hand, of the activity of the Police in picking up starving wanderers who have no homes in the district.

C.—ADVICE AS TO MEASURES AND METHODS OF WORKING WHICH SEEM LIKELY TO PROVE MOST EFFECTIVE IN FUTURE IN THESE TWO RESPECTS.

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26. I recommend that the Village Registers of poor including at first only the classes of persons indicated in paragraph 34 of the Famine Code, be prepared as soon as ever the existence of distress is suspected, the mukaddam being reminded of his duty to organize private charity for the support of the helpless. Should he experience difficulty in raising the necessary funds the fact will in itself be significant. Should it appear that beggars are commencing to leave their villages and seek the towns, measures should be taken to assist private charity and check this tendency betimes. Otherwise we have to sweep into our poor-houses people who might have been kept on relief in their villages from the first.

27. The fact must be deliberately faced, that at the beginning of the rains—before the maize and minor millets ripen—a large portion of the distressed population must be brought on the Village Relief lists, although capable of doing some work *were it possible to bring work to their doors*. Therefore before the monsoon sets in, the Inspecting staff for Village Relief must be largely strengthened for the heavy work before them, and Inspection bungalows must be provided to facilitate touring in the rains. It should be clearly laid down that in the slack season (July and August) all starving persons are to be admitted to Village Relief, *whether apparently fit for work or not.*

28. With this contingency in view, there is no need to guard too carefully against the earnings of the labourers on relief works exceeding at times—or in single instances—a bare subsistence allowance. If they have nothing to spare either in cash or in constitution when the rains begin, they will run down all the faster and come the sooner on village relief.

29. All relief works should be closed when the rains begin, the workers being given a month's pay and sent to their homes. If they have no homes in the district, they should be drafted to a single work, until they can be sent to their homes. The value of the work done in the intervals of rainfall is not sufficient to make good the cost of shelters, establishment, hospitals, etc., and the people might as well be on Village Relief.

30. For the proper supervision of relief-works a special body of European Inspectors, preferably Staff Corps Officers, should be placed at the disposal of the Executive Engineer.

31. There should be no piece-work in the Plateau districts. The aboriginals are afraid of a system which they do not understand: and give an excellent outturn as task-workers.

32. The excellent plan of permitting the removal, free of charge, of edible products in Government forests, and of reducing or remitting grazing fees and fees on bamboos should be always resorted to in times of distress.

(*President.*)—How long have you been Commissioner in the Nerbudda Division?—Since May 1896.

Before that where were you?—In Chhattisgarh, and for 6 months in Jabalpur.

You say in your written statement in paragraph 1, that it was determined to open relief-works, in accordance with the scheme prepared, without further delay, and that by the 25th December nearly 30,000 persons were on relief-works. Had you done that in all districts?—Yes; fourteen works were opened.

When you joined the Division in May 1896, was there anything to make you alarmed about the people in the District?—No.

You say in paragraph 4 that large numbers of labourers refused to stir from their homes, and were building their hopes on their patches of maize, etc. You are referring to the Gonds chiefly?—Yes.

In all tracts there was a large increase of distress in the rains?—Yes.

It had nothing to do with the reduction of works and the policy of sending people away to their homes?—No; I think it is connected with the ordinary conditions of labour in these Provinces. Mostly the people we relieved were the agricultural labouring classes. For them, the months of July and August are always a trying time.

Is there nothing going on in the rains?—The rains are pretty continuous, and seeds are being put into the ground, and they have to wait till the crop appears above the ground.

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You say in paragraph 8 that early in January orders were received from the Chief Commissioner, whereby the "officers in charge" of relief-works becatae Public Works subordinates; and the whole management of the relief-works then in operation was transferred to the Public Works Department. Have you anything to say about that change? To what extent do you approve of it?—I think it was an excellent measure.

You don't think it was carried too far, so as to deprive the Deputy Commissioner of any power of controlling relief, which he should have had?—No; I don't think so, in my Division.

Is the Deputy Commissioner still able to interfere in any case in which he might be required to interfere?—Yes, in concert with the Executive Engineers. So long as he and the Executive Engineer worked in harmony there was no difficulty.

Did he have any control in the operations?—Whenever he went and saw that there was anything particularly wrong, as regards people not being freely admitted or being turned away, he represented it to the Executive Engineer, and got it put right.

He could not give an order?—I think he referred to the Executive Engineer first.

He could not give an order to the Executive Engineer which he was bound to carry out?—That is not clear to my mind.

Do you think it ought to be made clear, or left as it was?—I may mention that we have had a meeting of local officers to revise the Famine Code, and we have in the proceedings of that meeting recorded our views with respect to the Public Works rule.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Do you think that when relief-works were started in January, there were enough works open for the relief of the District?—That is my belief.

Had you any difficulty in getting the Public Works to open works when you thought it necessary?—At first there was a hard-and-fast rule, that notmore than four works should be opened in the same district. We contested that, and it was not rigidly enforced.

In some districts you had more than four?—Yes, in Narsingpur we had six, and in Hoshangabad considerably more than four.

Did the works you had open in March draw the people from all parts of the district?—There was a difference between the Valley District and the Ghat District. I think that in the Valley Districts they drew all the people except the Gonds and Korkus, but in the Ghat Districts I don't think we were so successful in drawing everybody.

In a future famine would you advocate having, during the open season, for the Ghat Districts, more works under Civil officers?—I don't think that works under Civil officers would be more easy to find than works under Public Works officers.

You say in paragraph 2 that a distinction might be drawn between ordering the preparation of the village register of poor, and ordering the commencement of payments. Do you think they should have been prepared somewhat earlier?—I think it would have saved time if the registers had been prepared earlier. At the same time I am not prepared to say that they were late in being brought into action.

Numbers increased considerably during the rains?—We started a different system in the rains.

In paragraph 29 you say that all relief works should be closed when the rains begin. On what grounds?—Because I think so little useful work can be done during the rains. We have to incur so much expenditure on the repair of buildings and special sheds for the staff, and the outturn of work is so limited, that it is a question whether it pays us to keep such works going.

Mr. White, Executive Engineer, says that of the black-cotton soil districts, but that in the Ghat Districts works might still be run?—I think in the Ghat Districts, less than anywhere, can they be run with profit during the rains.

In paragraph 30 you refer to Staff Corps officers. Had you as many as you could have profitably employed?—I could have employed some in Betul and Chhindwara.

Had you enough Circle Inspectors?—Yes.

At all points of time?—Yes, and the number of them was increased as we thought necessary.

As to the wage, I gather most of the people were in receipt of the D wage. Do you think that was sufficient for the time of the year?—Yes, that is my conclusion.

They kept in fair health?—As far as I saw.

(*President.*)—Ought not there to be an abundance of mahua at that time?—Yes: but all classes did not profit by it alike.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—You had people who worked before the mahua came in?—Yes.

They were on the D wage?—Yes.

What was their condition?—Excellent.

You say in paragraph 11 that ultimately the task-work system was modified by the partial introduction of piece-work. I should like to know your opinion of that. Do you think the substitution was a wise one?—It is difficult to speak of its wisdom. If left optional with me, I would have no piece-work, because you thereby reduce the workers to the smallest earnings, leaving them no margin. They have nothing to fall back upon when the rainy season arrives and works have to be stopped. Hence they come the more quickly on to village-relief, and the money economised in their wages is expended on keeping them alive later on.

Had you task-work open in the rains?—Yes.

Do you think that many people were earning wages who ought not to have been on works?—At the very beginning before we had properly organized, I noticed a number of people who looked as if they might have done without relief. Later on I found no persons who should not have been on works.

On the approach of the rains, by compulsorily closing works, you would provide for the cultivation of fields?—Yes.

Do you consider relief centres a temporary expedient?—We had no relief centres on the same lines as at Jabalpur.

You remember that some telegrams from Berar passed about the emigration of people from Berar. What were the facts?—It was proved to be a mistake; that the people had not come from Berar but Balaghat.

They alleged that the introduction of piece-work had sent them?—I found nothing to support that view.

You say in paragraph 22 that the administration of village-relief was very effectively supervised in all districts except perhaps Betul, where at the beginning, owing to the inexperience and ill-health of the District Officer, arrangements were defective. Were insufficient people put on?—In Mulai Tahsil. The Tahsildar was not an efficient officer.

Did severe distress arise?—We found it necessary to put a number of people on village-relief.

In paragraph 24 you doubt the economic value of kitchens under Malguzars, etc. Some officers have praised them very highly. You have seen a good deal of their working?—My reasons are given in paragraph 18 of my written note, (1) children do not care to leave their villages and travel a distance, especially in the rainy weather, when, moreover, it is dangerous to their health; (2) it is difficult to supervise satisfactorily the working of such a number of kitchens when managed by non-resident Malguzars. The arrangements look very well on paper, but if you come down on them unawares, you will find that some of the kitchens do not exist, and that the money has been misappropriated; (3) children of certain castes are not allowed to go to the kitchens at all.

You say it seemed preferable to adhere to the money-dole system in villages not within easy reach of a kitchen?—Yes.

You are not afraid of parents stinting the children?—No, because we saw, as a matter of fact, that the children did not suffer.

In paragraph 32 you mention the utility of opening forests. Were they opened to the fullest possible extent on the present occasion?—I think that all the concessions that were required were granted.

(*President.*)—Was there much loss of cattle?—There was in Hoshangabad a certain loss. To my mind it was a beneficial loss, as the old and useless cattle died off.

There was sufficient fodder for the others, I suppose?—Apparently.

I think the forests were open to free grazing?—To bullocks and he-buffaloes.

On the subject of Gonds coming to works, I see in a letter of the 11th January to the Chief Commissioner you make some observations?—I was considerably puzzled, and the conclusion I arrived at was that the men who came on to our works were men who were accustomed to the repair of Public Works roads, or to bring their products for sale. The ordinary Gonds who never leave the jungles, it was very hard to get.

Mr. Ryves, in his report, says that the supervision of the contractors and their servants was very unpopular with the Gonds and Korkus, and nearly all these aborigines deserted the work at once and for good. Did that coincide with what you saw?—In Betul they didn't abandon the works.

(*Mr. Bose.*)—With reference to what you say in paragraph 10 of your note, how are these people to be dealt with in your opinion? Can you suggest anything? Would you fine below the minimum?—Yes.

Can you remember when the poor-house at Narsinghpur was first opened?—In August 1896.

Was it not opened once before in 1895?—That was before my time.

(*Dr. Richardson.*)—You say in paragraph 25 that there was considerable mortality among the inmates of poor-houses; you think that the shutting up in poor-houses of persons in indifferent health does not tend to their recovery. Do you think that was the chief cause of mortality?—That is only a suggestion of mine. Not being a medical man, I cannot give an explanation.

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Do you happen to know how many died within the first three days of admission?—No.

The evidence we have had about the poor-houses from medical officers has been to the effect that the mortality was due to prolonged privation before people had been received in poor-houses, and it is pretty well-known that when people have been subjected to starvation for some time, a period very soon arrives when to give food is ineffectual in saving life?—A point I have noticed is that men who have been inmates for two or three months have suddenly died off.

You say children in orphanages thrived greatly. Did they do so with you?—Yes.

The mortality in most of the orphanages has been appalling and the general statement has been to the effect that they seemed to thrive for a while, and went off suddenly. You say the newer orphans did well?—Yes.

You have no statistics?—No.

CAPTAIN A. F. PINHEY, Political Agent, Baghelkhand, called in and examined.

I put in a written statement of evidence.

Capt A. F. Pinhey.

18th Mar. 1898.

The final Famine Report of the Baghelkhand Agency, forwarded herewith, gives my views generally on the question of famine administration in Native States situated as are Rewah and the other small states of this Agency: And I would especially refer to Parts III, V and VII and paragraphs 25, 27 and 30 and the appendices of the report.

2. My experience of famine work is limited to Native States, and in their case I would urge generally that any Code or instructions should be of the briefest and simplest description. The abstract Famine Code for Native States is undoubtedly very much simpler than the General Famine Code from which it is taken. But it is not quite simple enough even yet for practical purposes, unless indeed it is merely intended as a general guide from which more special and simpler rules can be drawn up to suit local requirements.

Famine Code.

3. For instance the classification of persons on relief works is too elaborate, as also the scale of wages suggested by the Code. Experience shows that persons in distress can be divided into two general heads, *viz.*, those who can work, however little, and those who cannot work. The latter were at once drafted off to the nearest poor-house, while the former were sub-divided into diggers and carriers, or, in the case of stone-breaking, into diggers, breakers and carriers. The carriers consisted chiefly of women and children generally belonging to the same family as the digger, and as far as possible each digger was given 3 carriers. For stone-breaking the men did the digging and smashing up of the big stones and rocks, the women and children did the carrying, and the breakers consisted of as many women as men.

Classification of persons.

4. In the matter of wages it was found sufficient to have 2 scales for men and women adults respectively. A man doing his full task received the equivalent for 16 chattaks of grain and a woman 14 chattaks, and they could be fined for short work done to 14 and 13 chattaks, respectively, while children were paid according to their ages.

Wages.

This generally meant that diggers received 16 chattaks and carriers 14 chattaks, and as will be seen from the Agency Surgeon's remarks in Appendix A, they managed to thrive on it.

5. The few persons of the higher classes who came for relief and could not dig or do manual labour could generally find employment as mates, mutsuddies, etc.

6. Comparatively large and efficient as the Medical Department is in Rewah, the time of the Hospital Assistants and Compounders was entirely taken up with the work connected with the various poor-houses near their dispensaries, and it was found quite impossible to detail any Medical Officers for work on any of the larger relief works which were at a distance from a dispensary. Even if the State could have afforded any increase to the ordinary establishment, it would have been quite impossible at the time to procure the services of extra Hospital Assistants. Simple instructions, however, on sanitary and other matters were issued to officers in charge of works and they were found sufficient for practical purposes.

Medical Department.

7. As regards the nature of relief works in a Native State, it may be stated generally that the most convenient number of labourers for a single large work is about 1,000, and the number should never exceed 1,500.

Nature of relief works.

The most profitable work is bandh construction, the common method of irrigation in this district, while the only kind of work on which relief labour can be made to approach contract labour in the matter of cheapnees is stone-breaking. The contract rate for stone-breaking is R2 per 100 cubic feet, and it was found that it could be done at about the same cost by relief labour when once properly organized. Road making, though not profitable, has two advantages—

(*a*) Any large number of labourers can be employed at once without much confusion under different officers.

(*b*) the task for each digger can be easily measured and his work properly supervised;

When a sudden large influx is expected, therefore, work on a road should be started, and as soon as gangs have been properly organized and the labourers have begun to understand what is required of them, they should be drafted off in bodies to some more profitable work in the neighbourhood, such as bandhs, or tanks, for irrigation purposes.

TESTS.

8. The best test for finding out whether a person is really in need of relief or not is to send him to a work at some distance from his house, a short distance is sufficient, just far enough to prevent his coming home to his own house every evening. But this test should only be applied with discretion and judgment and never quite at first; only after Relief works have been going on for some time in a particular neighbourhood and the officers have come to know something about the condition of the people and villages in the district.

Tests.

EMIGRATION.

9. My views on emigration will be found in Part V of the Report, paragraph 46 containing such suggestions as I have to offer. The important points to notice are that—

Emigration.

(1) Emigration from a Native State into British India is not necessarily due to the inadequacy of relief works, but much rather to a general impression that when a ryot is in distress the British "Sarkar" can help him and no one else.

(2) It is necessary, therefore, to prevent this either by forcibly stopping persons from coming across the Border or by paying them the minimum wages if they happen to elude the Police.

(3) Direct intercourse should be established between local officials on both sides of the Border, who

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should act promptly and at once, without waiting for orders sent round through the Collector and Political Agent.

10. Speaking generally it may be said that, given a Native State with a fairly good working administration such as Rewah, a simple code of instructions and a large surplus in the Treasury, there is no reason why famine operations should not be as successfully conducted, under the general supervision of the Political Officer, as in British India. As an example of good famine work in a small state, I would refer to my remarks on Nagode, paragraph 30 of the report. The State is under management, and with a good Dewan in charge the result has been most successful.

Suggestions for regulating village Relief works in Rewah.

1. Village Relief works should be carried out through the agency of zamindars or other landed proprietors and under the control of the District Officer, who will inspect each such work from time to time.

2. Village works shall be carried out by means of advances given to landowners under certain conditions calculated to ensure the expenditure of the money on the relief of distress in the village.

3. The kinds of work recommended as village works are as follows :—

(i) Improving existing tanks or digging new ones.

(ii) Constructing or repairing bandhs.

(iii) Constructing or repairing wells, whether masonry or "kutcha."

(iv) Preparing black cotton (mehr) soil for irrigation as laid down in separate instructions on the subject.

(v) Filling up insanitary hollows, clearing out streets and lanes, excavating channels for draining village sites, etc.

4. The main objects of these works are :—

(i) To keep together the cultivating and labouring classes of the village and prevent them from wandering away perhaps never to return.

(ii) To improve the sanitary condition and productive qualities of the village.

5. As these objects are, though indirectly beneficial to the Durbar, directly profitable to the village landholders themselves, advances will be recoverable either wholly or partially according to circumstances, but no interest will be charged.

6. In exceptional cases, where no landholder is willing to come forward and accept an advance on the conditions laid down, the work may be executed entirely from Durbar funds. In such cases the work will still be carried out through the agency of the landholder, who will be required to furnish detailed accounts of the expenditure incurred. The revenue to be recovered from any land improved by such work executed at the Durbar's expense will be paid at an enhanced rate according to the settlement rules in force.

7. The conditions on which an advance will be made to any landholder on application will be as follows :—

(i) That the village concerned is one which requires relief.

(ii) That the proposed work is suitable for the object aimed at.

(iii) That the applicant is able to carry it out with advantage to the people.

(iv) That an estimate for the work will be carried out by some competent official of the Durbar.

(v) That the advance will be paid to the granter by suitable instalments as the work proceeds.

(vi) That the landholder will furnish a return showing the number of labourers at work and the total amount of wages paid on each day.

(vii) That no exact account need be rendered. It will only be necessary to satisfy the Inspecting Officer at his final measurement that the work done is commensurate with the amount of money expended on it according to the estimate prepared beforehand.

(viii) That the work will be carried out as directed by the District Officer with respect to—

(*a*) Manner in which work shall be executed.

(*b*) Classes of labourers to be employed.

(*c*) Wages and rates.

(*d*) Periodical returns.

(ix) That the work will be carefully inspected and measured, when completed, by some competent Durbar Official, who will report whether in his opinion the work has been satisfactorily carried out or otherwise.

(x) That if the work has been satisfactorily executed, the advance will be recoverable, wholly or in part without interest by two yearly instalments commencing with the Autumn Kist of 1897.

(xi) That if at any time it is found that the work is not being satisfactorily carried out and the money advanced is being wasted, all further advances for that work will be stopped and the money advanced up to date will be recoverable at once without interest.

8. The above conditions should be widely circulated in all distressed parts of the States, and landholders should be encouraged in every way by the District Officer to apply for advances.

(*President.*)—How many Native States are there within your Agency?—Twelve. They are most of them small. Rewa is the most important.

Rewa borders on Banda and Allahabad?—Yes.

Relief-works were started in February and March 1895.—Yes.

What kind of relief-works?—They made a road and a big tank at Sutna. They were only at Sutna. There were no relief-works in the district.

Were you then in Rewa?—I went to Rewa in May 1895. I remained there for six months, and went again in April 1896.

In May 1895 were these works going on?—Yes, on a very small scale.

Did the people show any signs of distress at that time?—Yes, to a certain extent.

What sort of indications of distress?—They were wandering about the place. There were a number of beggars.

The monsoon of 1895 was a very bad one?—Yes.

It closed very early?—About the middle of September.

After that you left?—I went away in October and returned in April 1896.

What was the condition of things when you returned?—They were getting very bad. It all depended on the rains and the rains failed us.

What was being done then?—The table given in paragraph 5 of my report will show what was being done. I may say that in 1895 the Rewa Administration was under the Superintendent. In 1896 full powers were given to the the Maharaja.

These works were started when the Maharaja had received his full powers?—Yes.

Were any returns made up of the death-rate in Rewa?—Only poor-houses, *vide* Appendix C, column 6 of my report, also the remarks made by Dr. Gimlette in Appendix A.

Do you agree with his first paragraph?—Not altogether. In paragraph 21 of my report, I have noted on the subject. I don't think there were a great many deaths.

Don't you think many died outside the Rewa territories?—Yes, to a certain extent.

I suppose you did not closely examine the system under which relief-works were managed?—Yes, I did, very closely.

What were the wages paid?—I have noted on this in paragraph 4 of my memorandum.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—You gave the money equivalent?—Yes, as a rule. Sometimes there was money scarcity, and then we gave grain.

(*President.*)—What grain did you calculate upon?—The grain that all the people were eating, jowar. There was a plentiful supply of jowar, and it was coming in.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Did you offer to import grain?—Not by Durbar Agency.

(*President.*)—Did you use contractors to supply grain?—Wherever there were relief-works, there was never any scarcity of grain.

You did not employ special men ?—No.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—Had you a Code on which you worked ?—Yes. We were supposed to work on the Abstract Famine Code, but found it too elaborate and drew up a set of rules (*witness handed in a set of rules for relief-works in the Rewa State*).* They seemed to work very well. I dare say I should modify a few now. They were based on the North-Western Provinces rules and Abstract Famine Code rules.

(*President.*)—When did relief-works begin in part of Allahabad and Banda ?—Towards the end of October, I think.

Do you know whether a number of people from Rewa went to these works in the hot weather of 1896 ?—I had no intimation of it

When did complaints first begin to come to you that Rewa subjects were going across the border ?—I heard from Allahabad in December 1896, and from Jabalpur in January 1897.

(*Mr. Holderness.*)—For a future Famine you would have a scheme for bunds and tanks ?—Yes.

Is that being done ?—Orders have issued to Tahsildars to make out a map.

Are they small works ?—I don't want any works employing more than 1,500. One thousand is better.

How many people did you employ in the busiest month in the State ?—About 70,000.

You would require to have many works open ?—Yes.

How would you arrange for the supervision ?—We did it this time by employing Tahsildars, Assistant Tahsildars, Kanungos, schoolmasters, and officers of the Rewa cavalry and infantry.

Do you think a fair amount of work was done by the people ?—I think so, especially in the metal-breaking line.

As to payment of wages, do you think they were properly paid ?—As far as I could tell, by checking the registers. I went round, often without warning, and had two European officers to assist me.

Was there not a case of some work being opened when the British officer came through, and then shut after he passed ?—Yes, it was in Nigari ; that was detected.

You have no mortality statistics ? Have you any idea of the mortality ?—None whatever, beyond the mortality in the poor-houses.

About the areas sown. Is it below the normal ?—Quite up to the normal.

Did you hear any complaints from the Central Provinces that they could not get Rewa labourers for agricultural work ?—No.

Was there much money given in the form of Takkavi advances ?—Yes, *vide* Appendix D, column 9 ; that is, besides the money given from the Famine Fund.

What other loans were there, distinct from Takkavi ?—From Thakurdars and Jhagirdars.

Were any State loans taken from Scindia ?—*Vide* Appendix G of my report.

* Not printed.

Written statements of evidence and written answers to the Commission's questions sent in by witnesses selected to give evidence before the Commission, but not orally examined.

CENTRAL PROVINCES.

Written statement of evidence by MR. KRISNAJI ANANT, *Extra Assistant Commissioner, Bilaspur.*

Mr. Krisnaji Anant.

In my opinion the measures prescribed by the Central Provinces Famine Code are sufficiently adequate to alleviate the sufferings caused by famine. But what I would suggest is that these measures should be applied in time and before it is too late, and that the same importance be attached to them as the authors of the Code contemplated.

The Code lays down what should be done previous to famine : what during it. The Code is thus divided into two parts, one dealing with the measures which should be adopted previous to famine, and the other with those during it. This division is a fair and clear indication that if measures are to be taken they should be in proper time.

Similarly, when dealing with the measures of relief, particular place has been assigned to each of them in the Code according to its importance. For instance, gratuitous relief has been dealt with first, then the relief-work, and so on. In my opinion it is very important to preserve the order in the Code and to act accordingly. If this order is adhered to, I think even in the severest type of famine, the extent of mortality and the expenditure of public money would both be kept fairly within bounds.

It is the reversion of the order maintained in the Code and the introduction of relief-work or the poor-houses before village relief, and similar confusion caused by inattention to the importance and bearing each measure of relief has on the movements of the people affected by famine, which is likely to render the famine administration of the affected parts unsuccessful.

In these Provinces distress is generally caused by local failure of the rains and consequently of harvests. This state of things in a district is brought to notice by the Patwaris and Revenue Inspectors month after month, and sometimes frequently under the standing orders. These reports of the revenue staff afford sufficient data to the district authorities for ascertaining the actual condition of the people and the state of the crops in the reported area, and to find out whether immediate action is necessary or not to relieve the people.

Having thus ascertained the position, it is the business of the district authority to apply the test laid down by the Code, and to see whether there is scarcity or famine imminent. It may be noted here in passing that the test should be applied in the area alleged to be affected. If the test applied proves only that it should be applied in proper time and place, that there is scarcity or that famine is imminent, the next step to be taken is to report the fact to the higher authorities at once and suggesting what measures of relief he proposes to adopt.

When it is decided to adopt measures, the first and the foremost measure of relief is to start gratuitous village relief or home relief as it is called. The introduction of this village relief especially at the commencement of scarcity or famine among those classes of persons who are under the Code entitled to receive it (and these are the persons who mostly suffer from distress and fall victims to the first effects of scarcity or famine) necessarily tends to prevent a rush to the poor-houses and other relief-centres. This form of relief makes provision for all persons who are incapable of earning their livelihood. It has the advantage of keeping villages and households together, keeping down the abnormal mortality, checking a rush of weakly persons to poor-houses and towns, and is in the long run more economic.

The only disadvantage which this form of relief seems likely to have is that it demoralizes the people by making them more ready to accept charity. But my experience is that this tendency is brought on late in the day by the terrible privations which the people have to suffer when the full effects of distress have set on them and their families and their patience is tired.

On the other hand, if any other measures of relief which in the majority of cases are remote, are started first, they necessarily drive whole families consisting of children and other weakly persons from their homes in search of those relief measures ; and this has the effect of splitting villages and households asunder.

Concurrently with the starting of village relief I would recommend to throw Government forests open ; if the affected area is a jungly one, to allow the jungly people to collect free of charge edible products in that portion of the Government forest adjoining the affected tract.

Having provided the incapacitated by giving them home relief, the next step is to provide for the able-bodied persons and others who can earn their living. This can be done by starting relief-works.

The above two measures make provision for the whole community resident in a place. The only portion of the community which remains to be provided for is the homeless wanderers who are not able to labour and respectable persons not appearing in public. For the latter class there is a provision made in Chapter X, which also provides relief to artizans, etc. For the former class there is apparently no provision in the Code. The poor-house of the Code is not an independent measure of relief. This institution, as contemplated by the Code, is a mere adjunct of the relief-work. For it is meant only for those persons who (1) being unfit for employment on works cannot be conveniently sent to their homes; (2) being fit for employment on works, refuse to labour.

That is to say, of the persons who come on relief-works those that are found unfit for work and who cannot be sent to their homes, must be sent to the poor-house. Similarly, those who refuse to work at the relief-work must also be sent to the poor-house.

So long then as relief-works are not started, there is no necessity for poor-houses. The latter is the follower of the former just as jails follow criminal courts. The establishment of a poor-house is not a separate form of relief, but is a part of a relief-work and should be managed as such. But in practice the poor-house is worked on quite a different principle. In it all sorts of people are admitted and fed and kept. And this state of things cannot be avoided if the introduction of the village relief system is not allowed to take precedence.

As an adjunct of the relief-work, the poor-house should remain attached to it. It should contain only those persons for whom it is intended. There should be only two classes of people in it and given separate treatment. The first class or those who are unfit for employment on works should be treated as patients till they become fit either for going on works or returning to their homes. The second class of people, or those who refuse to labour, should be treated as misdemeanants and put on penal diet. Properly speaking, this should not be called a poor-house, but a cure-house.

It will be seen that incapacitated persons are provided for by village relief ; able-bodied and others able to earn their livelihood by relief-works : respectable persons and artizans are given special relief.

It is only the homeless wanderers who are not able to do labour or who are prohibited by the custom of the country from working who have to be provided for. For such people establishing of poor-houses in their true sense and as independent measures of relief is required.

It is possible that such men could as well be kept and fed at the cure-house. But in my opinion it would not be advisable to keep so many different classes of people requiring different treatment in all matters in one and the same place.

There should be at least one such poor-house for a tahsil. Here cooked food shall be distributed once a day, say at noon, to the persons applying for it. To guard against fraud, giving of village relief to those who can take food in their houses should be stopped within three miles distance from the time such a poor-house is established. Accommodation may be provided for such who choose to live in it, but none should be compelled to reside there or closely watched. A hospital may be provided for the treatment of sick persons.

Establishment of children's kitchens is a sufficient provision for children of starving parents.

When scarcity prevails or famine is imminent, efforts should in my opinion be made to check export trade of grain so that the ruling prices may not be materially affected. The export trade at such times brings on panic and leads to grain riots. There is no part of India which entirely depends on another part of the empire for its food-grain, and consequently any check on the export trade could not materially affect the condition of any part of it. It has the tendency to equalize the prices. Any sudden rise in prices of food-grain makes the condition of the poor very miserable, produces sudden panic, and leads those persons who have stocks of grain to withhold from selling their grain. *Mr. Krishnaji Anant.*

In my opinion the minimum ration scale prescribed in section 82 of the Code, which is adopted in all the poor-houses and similar institutions, is a little bit insufficient, inasmuch as the ration having to pass through so many hands is reduced in quantity before it comes to the recipient. I would make it 9 chattacks of rice or flour in the case of a man, and 8 chattaks in that of a woman. The other items of the ration may remain as they are.

Written statement by Mr. W. J. Bagley, *Extra Assistant Commissioner, Betul, dated 21st February 1898.*

1. I was practically in charge of the village relief measures which were introduced in the Betul tahsil of this district, in January 1897, and continued till the end of the year. *Mr. W. J. Bagley.*

I had done similar work in the Madras famine in 1878, and was selected by the Commissioner of the Division to organize village relief in this district, and, after visiting some 30 or 40 typical villages, I prepared a scheme for the introduction and working of the provisions of the Code in this branch of relief.

The register prescribed by Section 34 had already been prepared before I went out, and I took the opportunity of explaining to the staff on the spot, the principles on which a money dole was to be paid, and the sort of people who were to be considered entitled to it.

The system adopted at my suggestion was shortly put, as follows:—

1. The register was to be prepared by the mukaddam and patwari of the village (Section 34).
2. The Revenue Inspector of the Circle was to check the register on the spot, and alter it as required, before admitting the people whose names appear there to the money dole.
3. The original register was to remain in the hands of the mukaddam, while a copy was to be kept by the patwari.
4. Besides this, a register containing an account of the receipts and disbursements was to be maintained by the mukaddam.
5. The Revenue Inspector was to visit every village in the Circle once a fortnight, or at the outside once in three weeks, and, having revised the register, was to leave enough money with the mukaddam to last till his next visit.
6. The mukaddam's register of names was to be revised by the Revenue Inspector or some superior officer alone, and I made it a *sine qua non* that the patwari was to have nothing to do with it.
7. The patwari was required to visit every village in his Circle at least once a week and correct his Circle Register of names according to the mukaddam's register so as to be able to furnish his weekly return with punctuality.
8. The Revenue Inspector was to enter all advances left with the mukaddam in the account register (in the hands of that official) and the mukaddam was required to enter all payments therein day by day, carrying forward the balance in hand to the next day.
9. In places where the mukaddam was illiterate, or unreliable owing to poverty, it was prescribed that the money should be advanced to, and payments made by, some respectable man who was willing to undertake the duty, and could be trusted with the money. In the absence of a qualified mukaddam or other person, the patwari was to write up the account and see the money paid.
10. Payments were to be made daily, where possible, and on bazar day, where the patwari had to supervise the distribution of the dole.
11. The Revenue Inspector was to begin work with an advance sufficient for a fortnight's payments, and to recoup it as frequently as necessary by sending to head-quarters a list showing:—
    (1) the amount paid to mukaddam in each village;
    (2) the number of adults and children for whom the money was advanced;
    (3) the date on which the advance was made.
12. On receipt of this requisition, a contingent bill was to be prepared in the Deputy Commissioner's Office and the amount drawn and sent out the same day by the messenger who had brought in the application.
13. The patwari was to submit, every Saturday, a statement showing the total number of adults and children remaining on the village registers of his Circle on that day.

The duplicate of the mukaddam's register which the patwari was required to maintain was prescribed to enable him to send the latest information available with punctuality.

14. The Revenue Inspector was to send to me a weekly diary showing:—
    (1) the places visited day by day;
    (2) the number of men, women, and children found on the list;
    (3) the alterations made by him; and
    (4) the amount left with the mukaddam.

Revenue Inspectors and Patwaris were personally instructed by me before they left for their Circles and again when I visited the villages of which they had charge.

2. Gratuitous relief was mainly given in the form of a money dole to persons in their own homes, and my experience showed that mistakes, where made, were almost always on the side of liberality. In such instances, it generally happened that a relief work being far from the village, and most of the members of the family being on the village register, one or more persons who might have gone to the work were, if at all emaciated, admitted to village relief instead. It seldom happened that a deserving case was refused, and mistakes were rectified as I proceeded from one Inspector's Circle to another, and showed them on the spot how the rules were to be worked. To be able to do this, I made it a point of meeting the Inspector in his Circle and keeping him for a day or so.

Home relief has saved many lives. It has been much appreciated, and I make bold to say that but few of the recipients would have survived if this form of relief had not been carried to their homes. It is true that kitchens if opened as a substitute for village relief would have saved the lives of those people who lived at or near the selected centre, but everybody could not go to a kitchen, whereas the dole reached the hands of all who needed it, however, inaccessible the place, where they were living, might be.

I think this system has kept families together, and I do not believe it has had the effect of demoralising the people, or of making them more ready to accept charity or less willing to help each other.

The persons relieved belonged both to the agricultural and labouring classes, and, as I have already noted above, there were some persons who were brought on the village register who might well have gone to a relief work. Even in these instances, however, none were given village relief who had resources of any kind, or had relatives who were ready to support them.

In ordinary years, the persons who became recipients of the dole during this famine, would have supported themselves by labour connected with agriculture, and such of these as were not tenants were necessarily left without employment, when tenants themselves were suffering owing to a failure of

Mr. W. J. Bagley.

the crops, and had no work to give them. I fear that this will always be the case whenever there is a widespread failure of the kharif crops.

Women and children formed the bulk of the recipients of the money dole, and it was only in the larger villages that there were any "Pardanashin" women who were found to be in need of help. No cases, however, came before me of such people who were entitled to State relief under the provisions of section 34, as far as I can remember, and those who were in straitened circumstances were granted relief from the Charitable Fund.

I don't think the small numbers of relief works can lead to the inference that no great amount of gratuitous relief is required, because it is impossible to have works within a few miles of each other, and instances have been known were people have starved rather than proceed to a work at any distance from their homes. These conditions have obtained in this district, where communications at certain seasons of the year are difficult, if not impossible, and I have no doubt but that this has been the experience in country of a similar character. Village relief must, therefore, be promptly introduced as soon as there are signs of local distress following a failure of the kharif crop.

The practice of requiring the incapable poor to accompany their able-bodied relatives to the relief works seems to me to be a good one, because, in any case, such persons must be assisted by the State, and they can be better looked after on a relief work, where, I presume, they will receive cooked food or the wages fixed for dependents.

I would certainly give gratuitous relief to an incapable person having an able-bodied relative who refuses to work, for otherwise the former would die of starvation.

Village relief, as far as I could learn, was generally very popular, and no doubt there were instances where persons capable of light labour were anxious to have their names registered, but on the other hand, I have met with cases where persons who, owing to old age or infirmity, were qualified, absolutely refused assistance on the ground that they had somebody to support them.

The precautions taken to prevent the granting of gratuitous relief, where it was not deserved, have been described in paragraph 1. In addition, there was the supervision of the Revenue Inspector's work by officers of superior grade. The conclusion to be drawn from what I saw of the work of Revenue Inspectors is, that these officials are not all capable of exercising the discretion given them, or of discriminating between deserving cases and those which should be refused. For instance, when I happened, in one Inspector's circle, to add a few names to the existing list in a few villages, he immediately increased the numbers in all others lest he should be found fault with for omitting such persons as in my opinion should have been brought on the register. In acting thus he admitted to village relief some persons who were not entitled to it, and I had to strike off their names when I came to the villages where they lived. In another case I found that, in an inaccessible part of the tahsil, there were many persons in receipt of the dole who were then perfectly able to work for themselves, and in some of these cases there seemed to be no signs that the person had ever been in a state of emaciation.

I would mention yet another instance where the Inspector on seeing me remove the names of some persons from the list in one or two villages, sent instructions to the patwari in his circle to strike off a lot of names in villages which I was going to visit within the next few days, thinking of course that I wished to reduce the number. The result was that I found the registers almost blank, and had to re-enter the names of all those who had been struck off.

I mention these cases as examples of the want of discriminating power amongst the class of men we have as Revenue Inspectors, and in order to emphasize the necessity for the employment of a higher grade of officer for this class of relief work.

In the portion of this district where I worked, we had 723 villages divided into 7 circles, and in an ordinary tract of country, I do not think these circles would be found unwieldy; but in the Gondwana where villages lie far apart, and it is difficult to get about during the rains, I think double the number of circles necessary.

I would, while leaving these circles in the charge of Revenue Inspectors have, in addition special Famine Relief Officers (Europeans by preference) to supervise the work of these officials. The circles near head-quarters could be looked after by officers belonging to the District staff, while those in the interior would need at least three special officers.

I would supplement this form of relief by opening relief kitchens at every police post, and would also have a poor-house in Atner or Bhesdehi in addition to the one in Badnur. I do not think it would be expedient to let these kitchens take the place of village relief, nor do I think it would be feasible to have them in such large numbers as to supply the wants of all those persons who would otherwise be receiving the money dole.

Gratuitous relief was, as I have already stated, given chiefly in the form of a money dole, and, as far as I am aware, grain in lieu of money was never asked for. It is true that during the rains it was difficult to procure grain at some of the smaller bazars, but advances were given to malguzars to lay in a stock, and this scheme was so successful that it might, with advantage, be reckoned permanently as one of the forms of relief suitable for a district such as this. In every instance the dole was given in the homes of the people, and I have known of no case where the patwaris or others acted dishonestly in any way.

Gratuitous relief was administered through voluntary agency only in municipal towns and villages of more than 1,000 inhabitants. In the former places both State and Charitable fund money was distributed by the secretaries and members, and in the latter a village committee paid money to those people whose cases had been favourably entertained by the Committee of the fund at head-quarters.

3. The measures of State relief in the district comprised:—

(1) Relief works under the Public Works Department.
(2) Poor-house.
(3) Village relief.
(4) Kitchens at centres.
(5) More extensive grant of *taccavi*.

Besides this, relief in the shape of clothes was given from the Indian Charitable Famine Relief Fund, and "pardanashin" women in villages of more than 1,000 inhabitants received a money dole from the same fund.

Money from this source was also freely distributed for the purchase of seed grain and plough cattle, and a few private individuals, such as Rai Sahib Sundar Lall of Multai and Seth Lachmichand of Badnur, assisted the poor of their own villages by making tanks where it was considered that they would be of some permanent use.

4. As far as my experience goes, all persons who were able to work were required to do so as a condition of receiving relief, except in the few cases where mistakes were made by the staff employed for the distribution of village relief.

I am not in a position to say whether people, during this famine, have resorted to the relief-works with greater eagerness than in previous famines—but I can say so much, that their attitude towards relief of this class varied with the locality, and of course also with the measure of the distress. For instance, when I was supervising a test relief-work on the road between Shahpur and Badnur, *vid* Rampur, our numbers kept increasing every day; this too in the months of November and December 1896, when distress could only have been anticipated and had not begun to be felt, while on the other hand we could not get sufficient labourers from amongst the poor when work was started on the Multai-Chichenda and Bordehi-Amla roads at a time of the year when distress was being keenly felt elsewhere. The first of these works was opened especially for the benefit of the distressed persons residing to the north and south of the road, but very few of them came, and most of the workers were people from Multai and villages where famine had not yet made itself felt to any great degree.

The relief works in the Betul tahsil were freely resorted to, and this no doubt proves that they were suffering more from want than those who seemed to be indifferent to the fact that a work had been opened near their own homes.

The terms of relief were generally approved by the people as far as I know, but I am not in a position to compare them with those in force in former famines, as no data are available here.

Written statement of evidence by MR. E. H. BLAKESLEY, *Deputy Commissioner, Damoh.*

HEADS A AND C.

Departures occurring in the recent famine from the Central Provinces Famine Code, and suggestions thereon.

Code Section 1.—(*a*) Each Revenue Inspector's Circle should be divided into two halves of about 100 villages each and two new men put in, leaving the regular Inspector to his Land Record work; this was actually done in Damoh.

(*b*) I used tahsildars for miscellaneous purposes (chiefly at head-quarters) only, such as superintending poor-houses and relief to respectable persons. In each tahsil there were, and should be, two inspecting officers (Europeans if possible) with nothing but famine work to do. They can then visit every village at least once in two months.

(*c*) I have found Committees, except as consultative bodies, useless. For executive work one man alone, a paid official, must be held responsible; witness the history of the Damoh Poor-house.

Sections 2—5.—This seems unnecessary: the man to hold responsible for reporting famine is the Deputy Commissioner, and if he has eyes in his head, nothing more is necessary. It might, I think, be noted that careful enquiry is demanded wherever the prices of current food-grains approach 12 seers to a rupee.

Sections 6—9.—The maintenance of a famine programme is most important, and its neglect has resulted in many comparatively useless works being taken up in a hurry. It should be revised quinquennially and should show:—

Railway embankments,
Roads,
Tanks,

separately.

Also areas in which there is *kanch* grass to be eradicated or where the land is suitable for embankment. The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner should be held responsible for its maintenance. These sections seem unnecessarily detailed and complicated.

Section 13.—I do not see much object in special "Test works." The better plan is to simply increase ordinary works under the ordinary management of the Department Public Works, changing them to "Famine," as is, I think, suggested by Mr. Higham. This supplements the demand for labour, and if applied in good time may prevent distress deepening into famine and perhaps avoid the necessity of other measures of relief.

Section 24.—A very sound section. Interference with trade is most disastrous; so are attempts of Government to deal in grain. I have reason to think that a good way to stimulate imports when there is a threatened failure of food-grains is to raise the rate of wages on large relief-works. Free facilities in the way of men and animals can, with advantage, be afforded by Government at difficult ghats and other places on roads.

Section 28.—Grain contractors have not been found necessary in Damoh. The ordinary petty dealers, if they only know they will not be interfered with, supply all the machinery required.

Section 32.—In Damoh we established what proved to be a very useful system. All wandering beggars in the town were collected daily in the serai by the Police and sorted out by a responsible officer and sent, according to their condition, to the poor-house, kitchen, Department Public Works relief-works, or relief-work subsidiary to the poor-house, respectively. If they came back they were treated the same way till they got tired of wandering. I think this system would be found useful in all large towns, such as the head-quarters of tahsils. It prevents the shuttle-cocking of paupers between various relief institutions.

Section 34.—It is better to order all persons to be entered who are in need of food and cannot work for it, leaving a column of the list to show the reason of incapacity, *e.g.*, "Old age," "Guinea-worm," "Weakness," etc.

Section 36.—Patwaris cannot be trusted with powers to add to, or take away from, the list of persons entitled to village relief, nor is it necessary to give them those powers.

Section 37.—Except at kitchens, relief should be given in money only at a scale of from R2-8-0 to R0-12-0. Mukaddams should be supplied with funds monthly and, as a rule, especially in the latter stages of relief, monthly payments to the recipients is sufficient. But I would leave the Charge Officers (of whom there should be two in each tahsil) discretion to order the mukaddam to make daily or weekly payments when necessary in particular cases.

Mr. E. H. Blakesley.

Section 48.—I disagree entirely. Provided only they are started in time, the large works should come first as "ordinary" works, and until it is necessary to start gratuitous relief this is all that is needed. If started late, large works are left unfinished and comparatively useless. Small works are most necessary in the rains and after gratuitous relief has been started in villages or kitchens—*vide* my General Remarks.

Section 49.—I agree. I can see no use in piece-work on "relief" as opposed to "ordinary" works. If it is desired to introduce greater stringency on relief works, this can be done by raising the task or lowering the wages.

Section 50.—I would strongly condemn the present experiment of dual control by the District Officer and Department Public Works. It should be one or the other alone. As the Department Public Works are admittedly unable to provide their own men as officers-in-charge, and as the District Officer seems necessarily more or less responsible in the end for all famine-relief in his district, it seems that the individual responsibility for relief-works should rest on the latter. The Public Works Department will have quite enough to do at first with the enlarged ordinary works which I have advocated in my remarks under section 13, and afterwards in advising the officers of the Revenue Department who will be responsible for small local works, such as I shall describe in my General Remarks.

Section 52.—This complicated classification is quite impossible. Mr. Higham's suggestions seem to me exactly what is wanted and to nearly resemble what we have been doing in the past.

Section 54.—This provision is unworkable. The whole body of relief-workers would turn up late every day, either in their own or under assumed names as new-comers. The plan which has answered best is to grant no cash to any one arriving late for work, but only a full meal of cooked food at the kitchen.

Sections 58 and 59.—The standard tasks must necessarily vary with local conditions and the physical condition of the workers. I would not lay down a hard and fast rule. I note that it is essential to start with small or even nominal tasks *until discipline has been established.* I found it impracticable on my local works to fix tasks for carriers. I formed my workers into homogeneous gangs of 30 each under a mate. The adult males acted as diggers and had a task set them, gang by gang. A varying number of carrying gangs (say 2 of women and 1 of children) were attached to each gang of diggers according to the lead and lift. Everything depends on having the gangs well drilled, and they should be ready at any moment to form up in line and hold up their spades and picks, or baskets, to be counted at the word of command or beat of drum.

Section 62.—It is not much use fining gangs. It is better to fine the mate. The mates should be held responsible for the exaction of the task, paid highly and fined liberally.

Section 65.—This is best effected by allowing no gang to leave its place, after payment, until the officer-in-charge has passed along and satisfied himself (by asking each gang) that they have been paid. I have myself seen an officer-in-charge, whose whole staff consisted of one orderly, pay over 1,500 persons in half an hour by this means: the distribution being done by the mates, who themselves at once made up any short payment on the spot.

Section 68.—The staff ought to have their weekly day of rest: but it is best to make it the local weekly bazar day. On that day only the kitchen should be kept open. I think it is simpler to raise the rates of wages by one-seventh and pay nothing for the day of rest; but if a separate payment is made, it should only be to those who have worked for three days previously.

Section 70.—My experience is that huts for the workers are more or less unnecessary except in the rains (when I would not have any big works open at all—*vide* my General Remarks later). I do not of course refer to office and hospital buildings.

Sections 76 and 134—6.—Unless, as is highly desirable, it is possible to provide a qualified Hospital Assistant on every big relief-work, it is better, I think, to give the officer-in-charge some simple drugs and make him his own doctor than to appoint ill educated medical underlings.

Mr. E. H. Blakesley.

Section 77.—In my opinion, the best way of relieving dependants is with cooked food at the kitchen only, whether adults or children, as was done in Damoh. If they do not like it, they can always go away to village relief.

Section 90.—If paupers are regularly drafted home when fit, and, still more, if kitchens are widely established, one poor-house in each tahsil should suffice.

APPENDIX IV.—Poor-Houses and Section 91 of Code.

It is absolutely essential to have a responsible well-paid officer in individual executive charge of every poor-house; he should, if possible, be a European. The rules in Appendix IV of the Code seem to me unnecessarily long and, in some instances, impracticable. I append the following notes drawn up by my assistant in charge of the Damoh Poor-house, which seem to me to contain all that is practically necessary in the matter of poor-house rules.

Poor-Houses.

I.—It is important that the enclosure should be on high ground if possible and certainly not in a hollow. The ground should also have a decided slope for the purposes of efficient draining.

The enclosure should be surrounded by a wall with one gate. Hedges encourage the accumulation of dirt and rubbish.

There should be a Police guard in charge of the gate, and one constable always on patrol duty.

II.—The buildings need not be *pucca*: they should, however, be rain-proof and well ventilated.

The hospital building should be near the main enclosure, as persons have continually to be carried from one to the other. There should be separate sheds for dysentery; a small shed for cholera and one for other infectious diseases should stand apart.

The main buildings should be divided into barracks bearing numbers, each to hold not more than 50 persons.

It is not absolutely essential that the sexes should be separated, though high and low castes should be.

III.—Under the Superintendent should be an Assistant Surgeon or Hospital Assistant, who should reside on the premises. This medical officer should, in addition to his work as such, be responsible to the Superintendent for the general efficient working of the poor-house; he in turn should be assisted by a moharrir responsible for the maintenance of registers, accounts, correspondence, etc.

The poor-house is almost entirely in the nature of a hospital, and, as such, should have a large under-staff. The barracks should have able-bodied mukaddams and nurses. There should be many sweepers.

IV.—The Civil Surgeon should be expected to make repeated visits of inspection. There should be a Visitors' Note Book for this and other officers' remarks, and an Order Book for the Superintendent.

V.—The diet should not be too liberal nor too solid. *Khichri* and milk bhat are preferable to *chappaties*. Vegetables should be freely given. Each day's requirements of food should be obtained, if possible, from the Jail, and then no store registers will be required.

VI.—The Nominal Register Form I should be kept up separately for each barrack and a ticket showing the daily total given to the corresponding mukaddam.

The Abstract Form II should also be drawn up by barracks. This greatly facilitates check of the numbers by the Superintendent or Inspecting Officer.

VII.—Latrines should be very airy and not far from the barracks. Weak people will not go far to a latrine.

Chowkidars should be always on patrol in the enclosure to prevent persons from sitting about anywhere at will, and punishments administered for such conduct except to the very weak.

VIII.—As regards disposal of corpses, I think burning in a kiln in the charge of a Brahman, as was adopted at Jabalpur, is preferable to burial.

CHAPTER IX.—Kitchens.

The rules in the Appendix of the Code seem unnecessarily minute and complicated. I quote from my Famine Report the account of the system which was pursued in Damoh District, and which worked satisfactorily:—

"The organisation of these kitchens was of the simplest. In most instances a school-master and in some a policeman was put in charge and given an allowance of ₹5 [or ₹10 if the number exceeded 100 children]: a daily attendance register was maintained with a separate page for each class. All supplies were purchased, paid for, and charged in the cash book daily; so that any one day's expenditure taken at random could be checked by Inspecting Officers. The *khichri* was distributed in tin measures at midday, when attendance was written up; a little extra food being reserved for waifs and strays who might turn up later in pressing need. Each person on the register had a tin ticket with the number of his class marked on it in lines thus | | | | and a corresponding mark was on the measure to which he was entitled."

These kitchens, in addition to the children for whom they were primarily intended, afforded relief to many wandering aliens.

The system of accounts and funds is described under the head "Accounts."

Sections 100 and 103.—This relief in the tahsil towns was given through the tahsildar. There were but few cases in villages, and I gave no one relief under these heads, except on the recommendation of the tahsildar or higher official.

Section 108.—My orphanage was managed by the local missionaries. The only objection to this plan was that their caste-fellows are shy of reclaiming the children, however scrupulously their caste rules have been respected. I am of opinion, in the light of recent experience, that the children should be kept, as a rule, at their villages, on a kitchen or village-relief, in the care of the mukaddam or some friend, relative or caste-fellow. Only in the last resort should they be sent into an orphanage. I am not altogether satisfied of the absolute necessity of having any orphanage apart from the poor-house.

Section 123.—The expenditure of the Police under this section is the most difficult of all famine expenditure to check and should be cut down to the smallest possible amount. I empowered every Police Officer in charge of a station-house or outpost to bring deserving cases into the village relief lists of their respective villages. When once they were there, the responsibility of the Police ended. This system had an excellent effect in checking aimless wandering, as I was able to hold the Police as well as the Circle Officer responsible that no deserving case went unrelieved.

CHAPTER XV.—Accounts.

This is a very large subject. I confine myself to the following remarks:—

Liberal permanent advances should be given, on security, to all Circle Officers and other disbursing officers. A fixed sum—equal, roughly, to 15 days' supply—should be left with every mukaddam of a village: this does not enter into or complicate the accounts, but is a safeguard in case of accident, as supplies occasionally fail through illness, floods, etc.

An Extra-Assistant Commissioner should be entrusted exclusively with the compilation of famine accounts at head-quarters and with controlling the expenditure, under supervision and orders of the Deputy Commissioner.

Simplicity is everything in accounts. In my humble opinion a complicated system stands self-condemned as such.

The system of accounts of village-relief in Damoh can be abstracted from my orders in the file. I will do this if the Commission desire it.

Accounts on local works consisted chiefly of—

Daily gang list,—abstract of gangs with amount of wages paid to and work done by each. } In which attendance had to be written up daily before noon for checking purposes.

Cash-book.—The daily abstracts of gangs were taken as the vouchers for wages paid.

Kitchens maintained a daily attendance register, to be written up before noon, and a cash-book.

The rule was that each day's supplies were to be purchased, paid for, and entered in the cash-book daily. It was thus possible to check any day's accounts taken at random with

the attendance register. Each officer in charge of a kitchen had a permanent advance for current expenses which were recouped monthly by the Circle Officer and patwari at the same time as he supplied the monthly cash for village-relief. This system worked well in practice.

Heads B and D.

(General Remarks.)

I am doubtful whether a "Code" is a good thing. When another famine occurs, what will be chiefly wanted is good men as officers, personal experience of famine, and, in default of experience, some simple practical hints of what has been found useful in the past. I do not think the form of a Code in sections is calculated to supply the last-mentioned necessity: while it is apt to hamper the discretion of the officer on the spot, who does the work. A glance at the present Code will show that it contains a mass of detail on points which are either unimportant or do not concern the bulk of persons who would turn to the Code for guidance, *e.g.*, Chapter I. Turning to Chapter II we see that the first thing to be done (apparently) where serious scarcity is imminent, is to submit special reports. Chapter III opens with the same subject which is pursued *ad nauseam*, varied occasionally with "programmes." Under Chapter XIII the first duty of the Police is to submit special returns, and Chapter XIV begins by directing the energy of medical officers into the same channel. I presume that all these reports and returns are a necessary evil, but they at least need not be given such a prominent position. Speaking for myself, what would have helped me most, in the absence of personal experience, would be the practical advice, in essay form, of a District Officer who had been in a similar position, which would tell me the points to which I should pay most attention in practice.

Whatever form of relief is adopted, I am convinced that the *alpha* and *omega* of successful administration lies in constant and systematic inspection by a responsible officer, who should, if possible, be a European.

(Note.—Frauds are not committed in accounts, but before the original voucher is written, I found it advisable to insist on all attendance at works, kitchens, poor-houses, etc., being written up before noon. Surprise visits in the afternoon then do the rest.)

There should be two such in every tahsil, and Revenue Circles should be divided into two, of 100 villages each, and a special Famine Circle Officer devoted to each half. This organisation should be provided from the very beginning of severe distress.

With such an organisation and a good up-to-date programme of possible famine relief works (little and big) ready beforehand, there seems to me no need for those large 'relief' works which seem to me to be the weak part of our present system. Here again, where inspection and arrangements are adequate, things may go fairly until the rains fall, but if supplies of cash fail, or sanitation is not properly attended to, or the sick and children neglected, the relief work becomes a centre of mortality. In the rains the weakly die from want of proper shelter.

In my humble opinion the first thing to do is, on the advent of scarcity, to supplement the labour-market by expanding ordinary Public Works Department works under the ordinary rules, charging these, if necessary, to "Famine." When distress deepens, open a kitchen in the central village of every patwari's circle, and, as occasion arises, graft the system of village relief on to this: also, if it be thought advisable, a small local work may be started in selected circles. This work should be the deepening of existing tanks, the building of land embankments and the eradication of "kanch" grass. Such works could often be undertaken by arrangement with the malguzar, and in many cases he would pay part of the expense himself (or at least accept part of it as a Land Improvement Loan) and take a personal interest in its working. These small works could be dropped at any time without waste of much money. It seems to me that the Government of India are entirely misinformed as to local conditions (I speak of my own district, or perhaps the Central Provinces only) when they presume that the supply of such small work is exhausted. The supply still existing is sufficient to last out many more famines. In the rains the advantage of small over large works is greatly increased: on the former the workers are in or near their own homes and can find proper shelter from the wet and cold. Moreover, local works have this advantage that it is practically impossible for the same person to receive two or more different forms of relief at the same time, as I suspect was the case this last year. That is one reason why I advocate the running of large ordinary works under the Department Public Works, until it becomes necessary to start gratuitous relief,—that is to say until conditions have got so hard and family mortality so far relaxed that able-bodied persons cannot or will not support their dependants. Then it is time to start kitchens and village relief, supplemented with small local works and to close the large ordinary works under the Department Public Works, if this is considered desirable. I would have no large "relief" works in the rains, as I think they do but little towards reducing mortality in that season.

I think there is small doubt that the cheapest form of relief (apart from work done) is village-relief. Then come kitchens and poor-houses. Of these the kitchens do far more good than the poor-houses, for they preserve the rising generation, and are not subject to those epidemics of disease which seem inseparable from the collection of persons in poor condition into confined spaces. I have had rough calculations made, which show that, with the best possible attention and care, one out of every four persons admitted to the Damoh poor-house died there. The people will not come there until they have acquired the habit of wandering characteristic of a certain stage of distress, and are mostly beyond hope of recovery, owing to want of food and unwholesome food.

The economy of works depends eventually to my mind on the value of the work turned out. In Damoh District it was considered that the construction of class II roads was the only available form in which employment could be provided during the rains. The result is that we find ourselves with many roads unfinished and, as such, comparatively useless, and which, even if they had been completed, I doubt if there would be sufficient funds to keep up. Now there is no doubt as to the utility of deepening a tank, building an embankment, and eradicating "kanch" grass. I say deepening, because the construction of new tanks is dangerous without professional assistance. The people themselves understand embankment well enough, and "kanch" grass is the special bane of the richer soils whose cultivation would be otherwise possible.

As regards the saving of life and the prevention of distress there can be no doubt that the most effectual forms of relief are kitchens and village-relief. I was myself inclined (and I fancy most persons who have studied the history of the English Poor Laws would be similarly inclined) to overrate the demoralising effect of giving gratuitous relief and the danger of the State's finding itself with a permanent pauper population on its hand. I think these fears were exaggerated. Demoralisation there is, no doubt, but it is not so widespread nor so permanent as might be expected in an European country. Of course the public (as opposed to the Government) is left saddled with a number of society drones, in the shape of old and infirm persons, whose preservation is a continual tax on the industrial community. But seeing that the Government has undertaken the preservation of human life, as such, the most effectual and cheapest ways of doing this are village-relief and kitchens.

In the course of my remarks under Heads A and C, I have suggested other minor points in which I think improvements on the existing Code possible.

I will conclude with the remark that, next after inspection, the great requisite in famine administration is simplicity in classification, returns, accounts, everything. To this may be added the corollary that in an organisation worked with ill-educated and often illiterate subordinates every endeavour should be made to avoid frequent changes in standing orders or regulations. Such changes should not be made without good reason merely to secure uniformity. It only confuses subordinates for no practical advantage, and in issuing orders it is always necessary to look well ahead in the matter of time. It takes about 15 days for an order to filter through from the Deputy Commissioner to a patwari or mukaddam, and about a month from the Local Government to the same humble individual.

Written statement of evidence by MR. NRITYA GOPAL BOSE, *Pleader, Narsinghpur.*

Mr. Nritya Gopal Bose.

As far as I can judge, the measures adopted during the recent famine have been no doubt a success. The high mortality in the Narsinghpur District was due to various causes. In Sambat 1950 and 1951 there was partial failure of crops, and in their struggle for existence the people sold all they possessed in order to procure their daily bread, but notwithstanding all their efforts, about the end of Sambat 1951 a greater portion of labouring classes and a smaller portion of tenants were half-starving. In Sambat 1952 a portion of the labouring classes had been reduced to such distress that now and then they lived on roots, barks, and leaves of trees which in ordinary years they would not have dreamt of using as fodder even for cattle. In Sambat 1954, when the relief-works were opened in various parts of the district and poor-houses were established here and there, a part of people were reduced to such a state that no amount of human aid could have saved their lives and restore the survivors to their former health and affluence.

The recent measures did all that could have been done in relieving the distress and saving lives, although it did not reach an ideal perfection.

These measures to a great extent were costly, and greater part of the money was spent in purchasing plant and tools and in erecting sheds.

All this expenditure could have been avoided if relief were given according to the system which was followed in giving village relief. Some of the roads constructed in the district will not be of any use, and the District Council will not be able to keep them in good repair. The Sankal road, for instance, will be out of repair in a couple of years, and in five or six years more it will become as bad for traffic as it was before.

The amount spent on such roads could have been more usefully spent in making embankments of fields and digging tanks and wells, and these improvements no doubt would have proved more useful to cultivators.

The recent system of payments in money is not so advantageous to the persons relieved, and the amount of money paid according to the Famine Code was not generally enough to support a man. I think such a quantity of grain ought to be given daily to each man which he ordinarily uses for one meal.

Written answers to the Commission's questions by MR. L. S. CAREY, *Commissioner of Settlements and Agriculture, Central Provinces.*

Mr. L. S. Carey.

*34. Rule XXI-A of the Patwari Rules lays down that the patwari shall visit each village in his Circle at least once a month.

Rule XXI-B that at the end of each month the Patwari shall send to the Revenue Inspector of the Circle a copy of the entries recorded in his *roznamcha*, under Rule XLII, regarding the general condition of the crops. Turning to Rule XLII, we find that the Patwari has, at the close of each month, to enter in his *roznamcha* the general condition of the crops of his circle, stating whether they are good or injured by deficient or excessive rain, frost, blight or insects, which information he has to obtain by careful enquiry from the cultivators and by personal inspection.

Apart from this, Rule XXII enacts that *immediately* on the occurrence of any calamity, such as hail, locusts, frost, fire, flood, epidemic disease of man or beast, or failure of crops from blight *or any other cause*, the Patwari shall report it in writing to his Revenue Inspector.

Rule 52.—Again, in the rules relating to Revenue Inspectors, it is stated that these officials are required to submit monthly reports in a prescribed form to the Deputy Commissioner, describing the condition of each important crop, with notes as to sufficiency or the reverse of the rainfall, and as to the existence of any damage howsoever caused.

Column 7 of this statement is specially provided for general remarks touching the existence of any distress amongst the people. This monthly report is due with the Tashildar by a date not later than the 7th of the month following that to which it refers. A copy is also sent direct to the Superintendent, Land Records.

Rule 53.—Further, it is enjoined that *immediately* on the occurrence of any extensive damage from hail, locusts or other insects, frost, blight, floods or fires, or on the outbreak of virulent cattle disease, the Revenue Inspector should submit a report to the Tahsildar, sending a copy direct to the Superintendent, Land Records.

It appears to me then that the existing arrangements in the Central Provinces for reporting failure of rainfall and crops are sufficient If these rules are properly observed, the Deputy Commissioner should get early and ample information. The only suggestion that occurs to me is the insertion of the word "drought" in Rule 53 of the Revenue Inspectors' series after "blight."

35. We have a revenue village organisation practically throughout the Provinces now. The institution is doubtless young, but it has, I believe, stood the strain of the past year fairly well. The exception is the tract known as the Chhindwara Jagirs, where however a few men have been put on in anticipation of sanction to the recent proposals of the Settlement Officer. In the Chanda zamindaris we have a few men, but not nearly enough. The staff will have to be increased and re-organised after survey in a year or two. The number of patwaris is also insufficient in the Chhattisgarh zamindaris, but I am sending up proposals for each district separately as I receive them from the Deputy Commissioners. The survey being just finished, the time has come to reconsider the Land Record arrangements. This matter will probably be satisfactorily disposed of this year, unless, indeed, the provincialized Patwari Fund is crippled by the large extra expenditure entailed by the additional establishments required solely for famine purposes and by a simultaneous reduction of income due to remissions and suspensions.

36. (1) Generally speaking, the crop returns can be relied upon. Every effort is made to secure accurate areas. In districts where the fields are small, there is no difficulty. In others, such as Wardha and Nagpur, with large open fields, we are gradually insisting on annual measurement of the crops with a 20-link bamboo. There is most scope for inaccuracy in the ill-defined *barras* of the hill districts and the Simga Tahsil of Raipur. Such fields yield the poor millets, such as kodo or kutki, and inferior oil-seeds (til and jagni).

(2) The rule, until recently, was to record as "new fallow" areas in which the crops were sown and failed to come to maturity. The Director-General of Statistics has now laid down that all areas shown must be entered in the crop column. I am not altogether clear that this is an improvement; still it might be defended as more logical, seeing that under the old system we took account of a 2-anna, 1-anna or 6-pie crop, only relegating the area to the fallow column in the case of *total* failure.

(3) We have got into some confusion in these Provinces owing to the Government standard varying from that of the people. Under the former, 16 annas is an average crop, while in Central Provinces' ryoti parlance, 12 or 13 annas is deemed an average. Hitherto it has been necessary to enquire to what standard the members of the Land Record staff are referring their estimates. That this is a fertile source of error, has recently been represented to the Supreme Government, and orders have been received that in crop forecasts, etc., the American notation should be used (100 being taken as an average crop). The Patwaris and Revenue Inspectors will therefore in future, I presume, return their anna estimates on the basis of the standard understood by the people. Deputy Commissioners before reporting to this office will convert into the American notation. This appears to me a most satisfactory solution of a difficult question. It appears that in some parts of India 16 annas, in the common parlance of the people, represents an average crop. This is not, however, the case here.

I may mention that in October 1896, prior to my deputation to Raipur to report on the situation, orders were issued for Patwaris to prepare careful estimates of crop outturns for each and every village. Revenue Inspectors were enjoined to check these diligently. During the first-half

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

of November, I spent a week or so in the district traversing 100 miles of the Simga and Raipur Tahsil, and I checked a large number of estimates. These I found in the main correct, and Mr. Scott, Assistant Settlement Officer, who was on famine duty in this district, informs me that he found them equally trustworthy in the Drug Tahsil. It may be generally accepted as regards rice in this district that a tenfold outturn is an average yield. The Patwaris' estimates were checked by questioning a number of tenants as to the proportion their crop bore to the seed sown. In this way allowance was made for fields that had absolutely failed. The unthreshed ricks of rice were also examined, and generally I was satisfied that the estimates accepted by the Revenue Inspector furnished, on the whole, a fairly trustworthy reflex of the agricultural situation.

37. The present practice is for Deputy Commissioners to submit to this office the agricultural statistics prescribed for submission to the Government of India. These are compiled in this office, and, as a rule, are ready about the end of November; for the agricultural year preceding, *i. e.*, in October or November 1896, we had the agricultural statistics for the Provinces for the agricultural year ending 30th June 1896.

The statistics which accompany the Chief Commissioner's annual Resolution on the Revenue administration, are compiled in the Secretariat from returns submitted with the Deputy Commissioner's annual reports on Revenue administration. The figures so returned are tabulated in a more convenient shape than the agricultural statistics for administrative purposes, *i.e.*, the kharif and rabi statistics of cropping are shown separately in two statements lettered D-1 and D-2. These statistics see the light very late. The Resolution should appear in April, *i.e.*, nine months after the close of the agricultural year. That for 1895-96 did not, however, for special reasons (*i.e.*, owing to delays in the compilation of district reports occasioned by the famine), appear until the 3rd September 1897. This state of affairs appears undesirable, and I think some arrangement should be made under which each Deputy Commissioner should report annually to the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, about April or May, the consolidated *jinswars* and *milan-khasras* for his district. These figures should then be compiled and printed and be at the disposal of the Administration about the end of May, *i.e.*, before the close of the agricultural year to which they related. Under such a scheme, figures for 1895-96 would have been available long before the famine broke out in October 1896, whereas they were not at the disposal of the Administration, until presumably five or six months after famine conditions were established.

This brings me to the question as to whether our present practice is capable of improvement in the direction of obtaining more early information of summer sowings. In other words, whether it is possible to ascertain by the 15th of November each year the area placed under the various crops since the 1st of June of that year. Under special* arrangements made in 1897, this has been arranged for the season just passed, and returns for 17 districts were submitted to the Chief Commissioner on the 28th November 1897, those for Mandla following on the 28th January 1898.

* *Vide* this office No. 2275-45-A of 14th June 1897.

In the North-Western Provinces the arrangements are as follows:—

The *kharif girdawari* takes place in those Provinces between the 15th of August and the end of September. The rabi between the 1st January and the 15th February.

In the Central Provinces we have only one field-to-field inspection. The system at present in force here was introduced by Sir Charles Crosthwaite and Mr. Fuller, both North-Western Provinces men, who were cognizant of the special circumstances of these parts and adapted the rules accordingly. In 1883 a Committee sat to consider a set of draft Patwari Rules. From paragraph 11 of their Report I extract the following:—

"The Committee are of opinion that one tour of inspection for both these harvests is all that can be expected of him (the Patwari) in these Provinces where circles will remain at least double the size that they are in the North-Western Provinces after everything possible has been done to reduce their area. Nor is a separate tour of inspection for each season so necessary in these Provinces as in the North-Western Provinces, since double-cropping and irrigation are much less commonly practised. That under the circumstances of the Provinces, only a single tour should be required of the Patwari for both kharif and rabi harvests, has also the weight of Mr. C. H. T. Crosthwaite's recommendation. The principal drawback to this arrangement is that it will be impossible for the Patwari to submit returns of the kharif crop area until the following March. But this delay must be ascribed to the weakness of the Patwari staff in these Provinces and to the lack of funds to increase it."

Since that time, it has been necessary to resort to special expedients, so as to ensure punctuality in Chhattisgarh, where the fields are so small and the *khasra* numbers so numerous. The *charsala-khasra* was devised with this end in view, and *jamabandis* are written up from year to year on an abridged pattern in skeleton shape. I may observe that in the Raipur District each *Khalsa* Patwari has, on an average, about 9,000 *khasra* numbers to manipulate. This represents an enormous amount of work.

It was observed a few years ago that accuracy was being sacrificed to speed in writing up the *khasras*, and that the map, which after all is the basis of all Land Record work, was not being properly amended. Deputy Commissioners were consulted, and there was a strong body of opinion that the date of filing the *jinswars* should be shifted forward from the 1st March to the 1st April This date was accordingly substituted under Sir J. Woodburn's administration on the recommendation of this office.

I do not myself apprehend that there would be any great difficulty in arranging for two tours of inspection in districts like Hoshangabad, Nagpur and Wardha, where the fields are large and the *khasra* numbers few, but I am not prepared to recommend such a step for the Plateau districts, where the distances to be traversed are so great, and unfordable rivers render locomotion so difficult in the rains. Nor does such a step seem feasible in Chhattisgarh. The Patwaris are ill-paid, and many of them display little attachment to their circles especially in districts where the staff is a new creation. There must, I feel convinced, be a limit to the amount of work that can be exacted from them. Even now the Chhattisgarh staff is of a very shifting character. I believe I am within the mark when I say that about 20 per cent. of the Mungeli Patwaris have resigned or been dismissed during the past six months. This is a serious loss of local knowledge at a time when it is most required. The reason for this state of things is, I believe, the unusually strict state of discipline in which the staff was kept during the rains when European Officers were continually on the move. In the Drug Tahsil only one out of the five regular Revenue Inspectors is at the present time available for Settlement work. The place was too hot for one in the Famine administration, and he has been removed at the instance of the Deputy Commissioner. The other three have been invalided during the past month, being quite unfit for work. If then we exact too much, there is every fear of a serious breakdown. It is, therefore, in my opinion, inexpedient at the present time to insist on two annual field-to-field inspections in the Central Provinces. I have consulted several Deputy Commissioners, and I understand that they agree in this opinion.

The rains of 1896-97, during the sowing season, were all that could be desired. There was no apprehension at any time that famine or scarcity would result from *short sowings*. I was on tour in the first fortnight of September in Bhandara and Balaghat, and prospects were most eminently favourable up to the 10th of that month. The figures for four years which are now available are contrasted below:—

	1893-94.	1894-95.	1895-96.	1896-97.
Kharif . . .	10,067,581	10,422,811	11,215,624	10,526,941
Rabi . . .	8,023,105	7,357,287	5,598,468	3,986,638
TOTAL .	18,090,686	17,780,098	16,814,092	14,513,579
Deduct double cropping.	1,803,784	1,715,997	1,206,792	581,218
Nett .	16,286,902	16,064,101	15,607,300	13,932,361

It was not then short kharif cropping which brought on the greatest disaster of this century. What caused the famine was the total failure of the September and October rains owing to which the kharif crops withered and the rabi crops could only be put down in dry furrows and in much reduced areas. All that was required then in October 1896 with a view to gauge the situation, was to apply the ascertained anna estimates in the various tracts to the average areas under the various crops in the past three years, or as

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was, I believe, done in Hoshangabad by Mr. Crump, to call on each Inspector and Patwari for an estimate of the crop areas of his circle, based on the normal areas of past years, corrected in the light of their village inspections and of enquiries made from the people. Such a procedure is similar to that adopted in framing the annual forecasts of cotton and til which have to be submitted before the annual *girdawari* is effected, and would doubtless yield a very fair idea indeed of the position of affairs if the crop estimates were accurately framed. Such special field inspections it is open to a Deputy Commissioner at any time to order under Rule XXVIII of the Patwari Rules, *vide* also paragraph 12, Chapter II of the Famine Code.

It would be well, I think, that greater emphasis should be laid upon this matter in the Provincial Famine Code, and I would also indicate therein the special circumstances under which a special *kharif girdawari* or *field-to-field* inspection should be undertaken. In cases where the sowing rains failed, *i.e.*, the rainfall of June and July was seriously deficient and there was reason to suppose that sowings had been very short, I would certainly advocate that this special measure should be taken to ascertain the extent of the shortage. Similarly, if there was a prolonged break in August which stopped transplantation of rice in the Wainganga District or *biyasi* in Chhattisgarh, a similar step should be taken.

In fine, then, I venture to recommend—

(i) That steps be taken to render available annually at a much earlier date, the information embodied in the *jinswars* and *milan-khasras* of the year, *e.g.*, the figures for 1897-98 should be tabulated and submitted in May 1898 instead of in April 1899, when the Resolution on the Revenue administration for the year ending 30th September 1898 is due to the Government of India.

(ii) While deprecating the institution of two field-to-field inspections *annually* by the Patwaris, I would provide in the Famine Code or the Patwari Rules for a special *kharif girdawari* in years when the agricultural operations of sowing, transplantation or *biyasi* were seriously impeded by a markedly deficient or late arriving monsoon. In cases where the monsoon withdrew abruptly in the months of September and October and early statistics were required as to the extent of the damage caused, it would, I think, suffice for Deputy Commissioners to call on Patwaris and Revenue Inspectors for estimates of area under each crop as well as anna estimates in regard to the yield.

38. Although it is stated above that the Administration was not in possession of crop statistics relating to 1895-96 until late in the day, this was not the case with the Deputy Commissioners, each of whom had the necessary figures available in September 1886, for the writing of their annual Revenue Reports. In most districts, indeed, it is probable that the figures were ready at a much earlier date. Anna estimates of the yield of each crop were to the best of my knowledge and belief furnished by the Land Revenue Department, without delay, and estimates of crop areas were called for in some districts. I have already stated that I found the anna estimates very well framed in Raipur, where I was deputed on special duty in connection with the famine.

For the Deputy Commissioner of Bilaspur who was returning from furlough, I had a special map prepared showing in colour the intensity of the failure of crops from village to village as reported by Revenue Inspectors.

I believe the relief arrangements of each district were largely based on the agricultural information obtained by Deputy Commissioners through their Superintendents of Land Records, but on this head Deputy Commissioners will be able to give more definite and detailed replies than I am.

57 *to* 67. These works played an important part in the relief operations of the Chhattisgarh Division and the rice districts of Seoni, Balaghat, Chanda and Bhandara. From what I have gathered during my recent tour, a great deal of permanent good has been caused in this way. Many old tanks have been repaired, and a number of new ones have been constructed, whereby the irrigable area of these districts has been appreciably extended. But for one tank constructed, there is, in most places, scope for three or four more. This year, I have found the people, especially of Bilaspur, hard at work at their improvements. Quite an appetite for earthwork has been developed, and much land in Bilaspur is being substantially embanked. Well-to-do malguzars who made thousands of rupees out of last year's wheat crop are busy now elaborating schemes for rendering the whole of their villages irrigable. "Our eyes have been opened" is the remark recently addressed to me by the malguzar of Supela on the Drug-Raipur road, who was one of those who substantially repaired a tank in the famine year.

Local works.

All energy so displayed must necessarily tend to render a larger area secure, but the more improvements made in this way during times of prosperity, the less scope will there be for local works when famine again declares itself. But we may at least indulge the hope that the carrying out of these improvements will reduce the severity of subsequent famines and increase the people's powers of resistance. Villages with a good water-supply, such as Malbar and Ratanpur, are said to have reaped a 12 to 14-anna rice crop in the famine year. Still the day is far distant, in Chhattisgarh at least, and indeed in most rice tracts, before all scope for improvements has been exhausted. When the tanks have been made, the lands below them can be more strongly embanked. This can be followed by levelling the fields in terrace fashion. When water lies evenly in all four corners of the field, the rice crop ripens well and yields fully. One Abdul Karim, a malguzar in the north of Balaghat, is carrying out improvements on these lines during the present year, having spent a lot of money on his tanks last year. The question has, not infrequently, been raised whether any large canal projects are feasible in these Provinces, and whether any such scheme would pay. I have heard it suggested that water might be impounded somewhere in the Satpuras, say in the Seoni District, and distributed thence throughout the Seoni, Balaghat, Bhandara and Chanda Districts. More recently a project has been mooted of making an anicut in the Tarudula river of Raipur, with a view to irrigating a substantial portion of the Drug Tahsil. It has hitherto been held that in 19 years out of 20 (such has been the regularity of our rainfall in the past) the cultivators would not avail themselves of such irrigation facilities, or willingly pay a water-rate. Interest charges would not therefore be met on the capital outlay. The matter deserves, I think, further examination. Rice is exacting as to the regularity of its water-supply, and a fully secured area in parts of Chanda will pay R4 or R5 against a nominal 4 annas or 8 annas where there is no irrigation. For my own part, I believe ryots would be, in course of time and as education spread, quite ready to pay reasonably enhanced rents in return for a regular and inexhaustable water-supply, and this would be still more the case if the transplantation system were substituted for *broadcasting* and outturns of 2,000 to 2,500 lbs. to the acre were obtainable in lieu of 1,000 to 1,500 lbs. Moreover, there would be a very wide field for extending to yellow soils and improving the system of double cropping, which is of importance in our black soil rice lands.

As matters, however, now stand, and in the light of such information as we at present possess, it appears indisputable that the village irrigation tank is an institution to be encouraged both in times of prosperity and when scarcity overtakes us. But the experience of the past year forces upon me the conviction that, apart from keeping up to date our famine note books with records of possible improvements, it is essentially necessary that a distinct understanding should be arrived at in regard to one or two preliminary matters. If these points are left undecided until famine impends, valuable time is lost at the start in discussing first principles. My points are as follows :—

Who will pay for these local works?

Are they to be constructed by Government direct agency, or by malguzars with their own funds, or with monies borrowed from Government? (One advantage of the latter system is that Government is spared charges of establishment and there is no peculation.)

Assuming that the loan system adopted in the famine of 1896-97 (with interest and one-fourth to one-fifth of the principal remitted) be accepted, then what steps are to be taken by a Deputy Commissioner if a malguzar declines to take action when he is called upon? Delay means the loss of lives, and the position of a Deputy Commissioner is, under the circumstances, both difficult and unpleasant in the extreme.

For my own part, I think that power should be taken to acquire sites suitable for tanks under the Land Acquisition Act, and to construct local works at Government expense in the event of the malguzar proving recalcitrant. The State could ultimately recoup itself by a water-rate. Had such a procedure been feasible during the past year, famine administration would have been much facilitated. Failing such

an arrangement, what useful works can be undertaken in Chhattisgarh? In many places carts pass with greater ease over the *bhata* plains than along made roads which are often not required. Moreover, the District Council is not likely to have sufficient funds available to keep these numerous roads in a proper state of repair.

Secondly, as regards zamindaris: are zamindars who pay merely a *takoli* to be treated on the same basis as malguzars, who pay a full assessment? Are their responsibilities in respect to famine relief greater than those of malguzars or is it the duty of the State even at the outset to provide relief for all those requiring it, whether resident in zamindari or khalsa areas? This was a matter in regard to which doubts were entertained on the outbreak of the famine of 1896-97.

Departure from the Central Provinces Famine Code.

158 and 159. The only subject on which I venture to offer a few remarks relates to relief centres—an excrescence on the Code which was developed early in the day in the Jabalpur Division. I have no wish to offer any criticism as to the necessity or suitability of this form of relief, for I did not come across any of these institutions. But where I think a mistake was made was in placing members of the Land Record staff in charge of these centres and tying them down to particular spots, instead of leaving them absolutely free to transact the many peripatetic duties that are imposed upon them by the Famine Code. Under such circumstances village relief must necessarily suffer, and the patwari's field-to-field inspection comes to a stand-still at the very time when it is incumbent on the Superintendent of Land Records to push through the *girdawari* in view to early submission of the annual statistics. It cannot, I think, be too clearly borne in mind that the principal measures of relief recognised in the Code are of three distinct kinds:—

(i) Public works under the Public Works Department.

(ii) Poor-houses at head-quarters.

(iii) Village relief.

For the administration of the latter form of relief (not, I fancy, the least important of the three) we are dependent solely and entirely open the Land Record staff. To transact their duties properly the staff *must* be peripatetic. Regular periodic visits should be paid to each and every village. Apart from this, the Land Record staff has many diverse duties connected with the supply of information touching the necessity of revenue suspensions and remissions, the preparations of lists of possible local works, of applicants for *takavi* and grants from the Charitable Relief Fund, etc., etc., *vide* Article 25 of the Famine Code. To tie down Patwaris and Revenue Inspectors to particular relief centres is then, I venture to represent, most inexpedient. The duties attaching to the control of relief centres should, I hold, in future famines be entrusted to schoolmasters or members of some other Department apart from that of Land Records. If these are not forthcoming, then some special agency should be entertained, or the services of intelligent malguzars should be enlisted.

While on this subject, I would also mention that in several districts a number of Revenue Inspectors were taken off their duties and placed under the Public Works Department as additional Naib-Tahsildars in charge of relief works. In the Damoh District four or five out of six Inspectors were, at one time, removed in this way from their circles. The matter was duly represented to the Administration and rectified to a certain extent, but not before Land Record work had been, in some measure, prejudiced. I think it is inexpedient on the outbreak of famine to weaken the Land Record staff in any way whatsoever. I would jealously hold each Revenue Inspector to his circle, of which he is presumed to have local knowledge, until the storm has passed over.

It should also be mentioned that in some districts the Superintendents of Land Records were taken off their duties, as defined in the Code, and placed in charge of local works. These arrangements may have been merely temporary, but even so they tended towards dislocation. I think the lessons of this famine indicate clearly that the members of the Land Record Department should not be called off their own particular duties during the prevalence of scarcity. Indeed I think most District Officers would now agree that one of the first steps to be taken on the outbreak of famine is to sub-divide the large circles which are controlled by Revenue Inspectors under ordinary circumstances, and which become quite unworkable by one man when the duties entailed by famine relief operations are super-imposed on those prescribed in the Land Record Rules. The difficulty of obtaining suitable men at a pinch is considerable, and it is a matter for consideration whether a Superintendent of Land Records should not be required to keep a number of his more intelligent Patwaris ready trained in case of emergency. Where famine affects only a portion of a Province, it should be easy to draft off well-trained men from other more fortunate districts. Our troubles in 1896-97 were, however, so widespread that Nagpur was the only division where this could be arranged and then to a most limited extent. In consultation with the Commissioner of that Division, two Revenue Inspectors were sent from the Nagpur and two from the Wardha District to reinforce the Balaghat Land Record staff. There are four Revenue Inspectors sanctioned for this district, but 10 or 11 relief circles had to be formed in December 1896.

199 to 206. I think there are portions of our districts where more *takavi* for seed-grain could with advantage have been given. The Pandaria zamindari is a case in point. There are likewise portions of the Behir Tahsil, the Drug Tahsil, and the rice tracts of Seoni where such a measure would have been attended with benefit. Large stretches would have been sown, assuming, as I think we may assume, that the seed-grain (*dhan*) would have been forthcoming on money payment. Still the price of *dhan* went up to well nigh prohibitive rates and the tenants would have had a load of debt about their necks. Still it is a choice of evils, and if the crops after a famine year failed Government would stand to lose heavily. To take the case of a tenant who borrowed enough *takavi* to purchase two *khandis* of *dhan*: if he reaped 20 *khandis*, which under normal circumstances he might be expected to do, he would owe at least 6 *khandis** to the State, but would still have 14 *khandis* for his own consumption and to pay his rent. His position would surely be incomparably better than that of some men I have come across this year, whose land lay fallow and who are now working off their rents and maintaining themselves as servants of the malguzar or richer tenants. If in such cases the period of recovery was fixed at two years instead of being taken from the crop which the advance served to sow, the tenant, provided he were an ordinary prudent individual, could presumably meet his liabilities, unless indeed (as is alleged to have actually happened in Hoshangabad) his *sahukar* seized his crop for unpaid balances of a previous season.

The question is a difficult one. It is manifestly undesirable in any way to break the connection existing between the *sahukar* and his usual *cliéntèle*. Where the State could with advantage step in is when the recognised *sahukar* declines or is unable to make advances. But it is not always easy to find out in due time how matters stand from village to village in this respect. That there would be a considerable risk of loss to the State I have already admitted, but I am doubtful whether these losses would approximate to the amount of revenue that has to be remitted when tracts are but imperfectly sown after a famine, and when land goes out of cultivation owing to relinquishments by ryots who sink to the position of day labourers. It is stated in Behir that some 300 Pawar tenants are migrating this year from Seoni, many of them from the 100 villages of the Diwan who holds on a peppercorn revenue for life. This large landowner has, I learn, failed signally to hold together his villages during the famine.

On the whole then I am in favour of a decidedly liberal policy in regard to advances for seed-grain. In reference to the past, it should be stated that a very great deal has been done by the State and by the Charitable Relief Fund with very marked success and discrimination in tracts such as Behir. The ryots are duly grateful for the aid, which is acknowledged on all hands to have been most bounteous. In point of fact there would, from what I can gather, have been little cultivation in the Behir Tahsil this year but for the efforts of the District Administration, which were ably seconded by the Charitable Relief Fund.

I think that the suggested system of subsistence advances to tenants is a good one, if applied subject to certain restrictions. It may, I think, be safely accepted that any tenant who goes on relief works during the hot weather is really hard pressed, and an advance of ₹20 to ₹25 to carry him through the rains would be a very great boon indeed. It should keep him in sufficient strength to weed his fields and carry out his agricultural operations, and in this connection I would note that not a little of the rice put down this year is alleged to have suffered greatly from defective weeding. Where this operation is altogether neglected, the out-

* The price of *dhan* was, I believe, at sowing time, 1897, treble that at which it stood shortly after the harvest.

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turn of rice is, I am given to understand, quite nominal, but the crop experiments which have been made by the Settlement Officer of Balaghat this season should throw further light on this point.

I do not understand that any such advances for *purchase of food* have been made by Government, but I write subject to correction. The Charitable Fund monies were, however, largely devoted to this object and with the most happy results to the best of my observation.

Having regard to what I have written above touching the necessity of weeding crops, the money of the State could, I think, be much more profitably expended during the monsoon in feeding in their villages labourers who did this work for the village community, instead of keeping work going on public roads of doubtful utility. This system has, I learn from Mr. J. R Scott, Assistant Settlement Officer, been pursued with good results in his charge in Raipur. I am not in possession of the details of his scheme, but the Deputy Commissioner, Raipur, can doubtless throw further light on this point if desired.

282. The rise in the prices of the common food-grains in September to November 1896 appears to me nothing more nor less than could have been expected, seeing that there had been so widespread a failure throughout so many provinces in India. This is practically, *i.e.*, subject to certain limitations, our fourth bad year in the Central Provinces. We have had two years* of excessive rain in the late autumn and winter months, which not only damaged the ripening rice standing in the fields or lying in the threshing floors, but also induced virulent rust in the wheat and linseed. Our gram was devoured by caterpillars, our early ripening pulses lay rotted and mildewed in the fields, while clouds militated against the due fertilization of our tur (*cajanus indicus*). Next came two monsoons† which withdrew too rapidly, leaving our unirrigated rice to parch under scorching sun and our rabi fields to bake, so that the plough would not work or germination was seriously impaired. The cumulative effect of these successive disasters has to be borne in mind. This picture, like all generalizations, is wanting in lights and shades, and the extent to which different parts of the provinces have suffered, varies greatly. Chhattisgarh fared pretty well during the years of excessive moisture, while the northern districts and Balaghat have been consistently unfortunate. It is to my mind surprising that prices did not rise before, but Central Provinces prices of course depend upon the rates prevailing in other provinces, and as long as the Punjab and North-Western Provinces, etc., could furnish of their plenty to our stricken areas, there was no great advance. The failure of the wheat crop from rust in Saugor and Damoh, in the spring of 1894, did not lead to any striking rise of prices.

* 1893 94. 1894 95.

† 1895-96. 1896-97.

The Punjab had a splendid wheat crop and supplies were poured in from all surrounding Provinces. When, however, the sudden withdrawal of the monsoon from the North-Western Provinces at the end of August 1896 gave rise to immediate apprehensions of serious scarcity, and merchants arrived in Nagpur, Khandwa, etc., to buy up all surplus stocks, our prices went up with a bound. This occurrence took place just as anxiety commenced to be felt about our own crops, and it was perceived that under no circumstances could they yield well, while in the absence of further rain, of which there was no immediate promise, a serious and almost unprecedented failure was to be apprehended.

Under these circumstances I consider that the rise of prices was a mere adjustment of rates to the level of existing stocks which were already much attenuated, while they were in all probability to be denied the usual replenishment that was expected in ordinary course from year to year.

283. The rise of prices during the past 30 years in the Central Provinces has been most marked. Every Settlement Report that has been written within the last decade bears ample testimony in the same direction, and our revised assessments are largely based on this rise. In the districts, which were most land-locked, prices have more than doubled, in others, the rise is from 50 to 70 per cent. This is mainly the result of the improvement of communications by railway construction. There were until quite lately officers in the Commission who remembered grain selling in Bilaspur at 64 seers to the rupee. If I can trust my memory, it sold at 32 seers to the rupee about 10 years ago before the Bengal-Nagpur Railway was constructed. Now-a-days a place like Bilaspur, which is tied on not only to Calcutta, but to the North-West Provinces by the Katni branch, is most sensitive to any rise of prices elsewhere, and rates tend rapidly to equalize. It may, I think, safely be said that the rise has extended to all food-grains that have a marketable value. The minor millets, *e. g.*, kodo-kutki, for which there is no export demand, have been affected indirectly by the drawing off of surplus supplies of other food-grains. The permanent rise in their price is not so great as in the case of staples like rice, wheat, gram and juar. During the famine year, however, the price of these millets went up exceedingly high owing to successive crop failures and the exhaustion of stocks. Seed-grain, I learn, was extraordinarily difficult to obtain in the Plateau districts and the Jabalpur Division. In the latter tract, sowings contracted from 435,161 to 344,808 acres in the monsoon of 1897. But for this failure of stocks, one would have expected an expansion in the area so cropped, as these millets can be sown so cheaply in view of the small amount of seed required per acre (13 to 15 lbs.). In so far as the depreciation of the rupee has encouraged export of food-grains to Europe and has thereby reduced surplus stocks, it must presumably have had the effect of causing a permanent rise in the prices of food-grains, and when stocks are low and no early replenishment is possible, prices must, I think, tend to stiffen to a greater extent and more rapidly than when the granaries of landholders, tenants and grain-dealers were well stocked.

But for the Bengal-Nagpur Railway, prices would, I believe, have risen in much more leisurely fashion in Sambalpur and its remote zamindaris during the famine year. As carts in search of grain found their way from Raipur into these tracts, there would, doubtless, have been a gradual rise, but the carrying capacity of carts is small compared with that of a railway. According to Mr. Fuller, "a drove of 2,500 pack bullocks only carry as much as an ordinary train load, and the same number in carts would not draw more than four train loads." The number of carts that would have found their way into these parts in the old days would have been very limited, and the great distances to be traversed would have militated against many trips in one open season.

In this connection, I cannot do better than invite a perusal of paragraph 13 of Mr. Fuller's review of the progress of the Central Provinces during the past 30 years, which was written in October 1892.

283-A. Prices in Nimar, a district that practically escaped the famines, ruled high almost throughout. The Nimaris have taken largely to cotton in recent years owing to remunerative prices, and have replenished their food-stocks from Indore Territory and the Bombay side. But shortly after the outbreak of famine, export from Indore was prohibited, and those of our cultivators in the Kanapur-Beria tract, who were in the habit of dealing with the Sanawad merchants, found themselves in the awkward predicament of being unable to borrow from the firms with which they had an unbroken connection extending over a long series of years. In Sambalpur the case was different. Here there was a large exportable surplus resulting from a succession of fair to good crops. Prices, to judge from the diaries I received from my Assistant Settlement Officer, who was working in out-of-the-way parts, were very easy in Phuljhar and Borasambhar, and by no means high in the Bargarh Tahsil for some time after October 1896, but in Sambalpur, which is on the Railway, they appear to have risen rapidly in sympathy with the general scarcity. The same tendency was observable throughout the district as soon as it became known elsewhere that Sambalpur had had a good crop and dealers had time to exploit the tract after the roads became passable. The Dhamtari Tahsil of Raipur also had a good crop, while the north of the district was in the throes of a very severe famine. This tahsil and the Sambalpur District contributed a very large portion of our food-grain exports during the famine year. Indeed, with the sole exception of Chanda, which was practically self-contained,* Raipur and Sambalpur are the only districts in the Central Provinces which show *nett*† exports.

	Mds.
* *Nett* exports.	65,800
† Raipur .	407,677
Sambalpur .	713,231

The course of prices at the four tahsils, which are given below, may be deemed instructive; quotations are for rice, common :—

	Bargarh.	Sambalpur.	Dhamtari.	Raipur.
15th August . .	17½	14½	17½	14
15th September . .	17½	13½	17½	13
30th ,, . .	20	13½	17½	12½
15th October . .	18	12	15	10
31st ,, . .	13½	11½	10½	10
30th November . .	11½	11	10	9
31st December . .	11½	11	10	10

These figures indicate that there was a very rapid tendency for prices to equalize as soon as grain flowed out to fill up the vacuum elsewhere. Between the 30th September and the 15th October, the first demands must have been made upon these tracts. By the 31st October, prices had bounded upwards in Dhamtari up to the level reached in Raipur. The same position was reached in Bargarh, somewhat later, *viz.*, on the 30th November. The prices quoted for Bargarh and Dhamtari represent quotations at the Tahsil Headquarters. In the mufassil they were naturally lower, at least by the cost of carriage.

284. Material fluctuations in prices appear to have occurred mainly in land-locked areas when once the first upward bound had been taken. Instances in point are the Multai Tahsil of Betul, the Pandaria zamindari of Bilaspur and the Balaghat districts. Import into the latter district was, I understand, brisk throughout the year along the metalled road leading from Gondia to the District Headquarters, also from Tumsar *viâ* Rampaili to Waraseoni. The Kachis of Mungeli (in whose hands the wheat and linseed *export* traffic has been since I first knew the tract in 1886-87), in the absence of an exportable surplus, devoted their attention to importing Burma rice, and are said to have done a good trade in Mungeli and to have extended their operations into Pandaria and Kawardha, in which tracts the famine appears to have been singularly severe.

There was a rise in Betul at the beginning of the rains, and it will be observed that the bulk of the imports into this district were consigned during the months of May to July. The possibility of the extension of this traffic had probably a wholesome effect on the local grain-dealers whose stocks were not, to the best of my belief, by any means exhausted.

285 and 286. I cannot speak from observation, but from personal enquiry it would appear that the rates in the mufassil were frequently higher than at Tahsil Headquarters. This was a natural consequence of the reversal of ordinary conditions, imports taking the place of exports.

Mufassil prices usually rule lower to the extent at least of cost of carriage. The quotations for Burma rice were then higher in the interior to this extent, and it has also to be remembered that the retail vendors had to make their profits.

287. As stated previously, the export trade was very dull, except from Sambalpur and the Dhamtari Tahsil of Raipur, which were not distressed tracts. Jabalpur Haveli had an excellent wheat crop, of which apparently it managed to spare a portion, while in Bhandara the irrigated rice came to maturity, south of the railway, and some persons had surplus stocks for export. Bhandara rice (*dhan,*) went, I believe, northwards to Balaghat for seed purposes.

288. I have no reason to believe that abnormally large profits were made by any local men. They simply netted the difference between the price at which Burma rice could be landed at stations within the Central Provinces, and the rate which they could get for it in these Provinces. There was nothing in the way of speculation as far as I am aware. The people who must have benefited largely were either the cultivators in Burma or more probably the Rangoon or Calcutta merchants, who, foreseeing a probable demand, purchased large quantities of this rice at low rates at harvest time in the hope that it would sell. Our people were at first alleged to dislike the taste of Burma rice, but they seem to have taken kindly to it in the end. During the year ending the 31st March 1897, Burma sent us 120,000 maunds of rice. I have not available in camp similar figures for the subsequent quarters of the famine year.

290. Doubtless not a few men had surplus food-stocks, but from all I learn they, in many instances, departed from the usual practice of lending on interest at *sawai* (25 per cent.) or *derhi* (50 per cent.) and insisted on payment in cash. In the Baihar Tahsil, through which I have toured during the last few days, I have been at pains to discover the exact position as to food-stocks. Large granaries are lying absolutely empty; this year's crop not being ready in many instances for deposit. In one village that I visited, the malguzar had formerly two large granaries full of *dhan.* One he had demolished to save the cost of repairs, the other was lying quite empty. Another malguzar of a really good village, Bagholi, with a fine irrigable home-farm, was only able to sow one-third of his land this year. The universal explanation is that stocks have become quite exhausted during the past four unfavourable seasons. I do not mean to imply that there are not some exceptions, but during this period many advances to ryots for seed and *khawai* have not been recovered, and bad debts have accumulated to a most unwonted extent.

I would add another instance. Bahadur Singh Gond of Sarekha in the Seoni District owns 18 villages and has a home-farm of 300 *khandis.* He could only sow 100 *khandis* this year, 1897-98, and had nothing to advance to ryots. He has about 600 *khandis* of advances outstanding against ryots for previous years. His own cultivation failed signally in the famine year. Little more than the seed-grain was realized according to his statement, although he has some irrigated land. The almost universal explanation of these unprecedented losses is that the tanks were breached by deluges of rain in August and the field embankments had to be cut to prevent swamping of the crops. Then came the absolutely abrupt cessation of the rains, when not a drop of water was left in the fields and in many of the tanks. I should judge that losses in this way were most serious in Seoni and Baihar, which are on the Satpura Plateau, but I have heard similar complaints in Bhandara and other rice districts. The Settlement Officer, Bhandara, recently mentioned to me the case of a malguzar who only sowed half of his land this year, reserving the balances of the seed-grain for purposes of consumption in the event of a further failure. The Brahmin soothsayers have apparently foretold that 1899 is to be a very bad year surpassing the horrors of 1897. This prophecy has, I believe, had an effect at places, inducing a feeling of panic.

I recently traversed the Rajnandgaon Feudatory State. In not a few villages I found the rice lands fallow, while the areas devoted to rabi appeared fully sown. The explanation offered was that the *sahukars* had held up their stocks of *dhan* from fear of subsequent failures, but when the rice crop was practically assured, they disgorged their wheat, etc., for rabi sowings. This may have been a wise and prudent measure in view of the state of their stocks. It has, I think, also to be remembered that when once the wheat crop is put down in rich black soil under favourable meteorological conditions, there is every chance of obtaining at least 4 or 5 fold even in the absence of cold weather rain. This outturn might be almost doubled if the winter showers came opportunely. Rice, on the other hand, requires steady rain for 2½ or 3 months and then six weeks of lighter showers to bring it to maturity.

291. My inquiries indicate that those cultivators who had grain to sell, amassed a great deal of wealth during the famine year, profiting thereby from the misfortunes of their fellows. I believe such men got full rates. They watch the market more than one fancies, and have their own ways of boycotting grain marts (*gunjes*) where they imagine there is a ring amongst the dealers, and they will not get fair rates. About two years ago, I came across some cartmen at Drug who were limbering up to start for Rajnandgaon, as they declared they could not get a fair price for their produce at Drug.

The Settlement Officer of Seoni quotes the case of a malguzar in the Seoni *Haveli* where the wheat crop was singularly good. He paid off a debt of ₹4,000 after haggling with the bania from whom he got a price treble of that ruling at harvest time in normal years, *i.e.*, ₹18 per *khandi* as against ₹6 or ₹7, the rate which ruled three years ago. Two malguzars that I recently came across in Bilaspur (where the wheat *sown* yielded 22 annas), admitted having each made ₹5,000 out of their wheat crop.

There is at Jabalpur an Anjuman which runs a Press and holds certain villages, the profits being devoted to the education of Musalmans. The Head Moulvi recently informed me that the serious liabilities of the Association (of which I have personal knowledge, as he does all the printing of this Department) that had accumulated during the past few years were all cleared off owing to the remunerative prices obtained for the wheat crops which yielded a splendid outturn.

292. Retail prices appear to have kept within one-third to half a seer of the pitch of wholesale prices in the case of wheat, rice and gram. I regret I have not the materials by me for effecting a contrast between the figures of 1896-97 and 1895-96.

293 and 294. Remunerative prices have doubtless led our people to part with a large part of their stocks during past seasons. They have had moreover to sell a portion at least to meet their revenue and rental demands. I do not mean of course to imply that this necessity does not recur annually, but when a succession of poor crops is experienced, stocks have necessarily to be trenched upon that would otherwise remain untouched. With the return of good seasons, people will accumulate stores again; and as long as the experience of this famine is present to them, they are not likely, if they can avoid it, to allow their stocks to run down as low as was the case prior to the famine. There is a disposition perceptible everywhere this year to accumulate

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stocks. Trade is dull, largely in consequence of this, but other forces are doubtless operating in the same direction. The advent of a railway invariably produces a revolution in a tract hitherto untapped. Such has been the case in Chhattisgarh during the past few years. Prices hitherto undreamed of were obtainable for raw produce, the standard of comfort rose, carrying along with it the standard of expenditure. More money was spent on marriages and clothes, etc., brass vessels were substituted for earthen *gharas*, and gold ornaments came into more common use. Every effort was made to meet the market. Cultivation became more careful, linseed double-cropping was largely extended, as this crop commanded a high price, the coarser and early ripening varieties of rice which were in the past largely grown in high-lying fields of poor soil were largely abandoned in favour of *gurmotia*,* a late ripening variety which is decidedly marketable. A similar tendency was brought to light latterly in Saugor. There, in consequence of the European demand for *pissi* wheat, every available field was cropped with this variety. Many poor fields were placed under it which were formerly devoted to crops for which they were more suitable. Under these circumstances, it does not appear surprising that stocks were reduced to a low ebb.

* This tendency largely aggravated the loss in Chhattisgarh on the failure of the September rain in 1895-96 and 1896-97.

The experience gained in Saugor and Damoh during the past few years and during the famine almost throughout the Provinces indicates that when crops fail and prices rise, private trade is ready to import freely. The only exceptions of which I am aware, are the inaccessible portions of the Provinces, *e.g.*, the Mandla District, the Chhindwara Jagirs, the Baihar Tahsil of Balaghat, to which may possibly be added the Multai Tahsil of Betul, owing to its distance from the Nerbudda Valley and the backward state of communications with the Nagpur country and Berars. The construction of the Multai-Pattan-Lendarzana road should however improve matters. The great need of the Provinces at present is railway communication between the Nagpur and Jabalpur country from Gondia up the Wainganga Valley with branches to Seoni, Mandla, etc. A narrow gauge line would suffice, and it would prove a great boon to Mandla and Baihar. Fortunately this line is now under survey, and it would be well could construction be undertaken in the coming hot weather, as there are not a few villages in the Mao direction and around Ugli in Seoni across the river in a decidedly depressed state, seed-grain† having been to a great extent unobtainable except for what was brought in and gratuitously distributed through the agency of the Charitable Relief organization.

† There are villages which have been fairly well sown. These belong to prudent malguzars with resources who have held together their own tenants.

295 and 296. The mass of persons relieved throughout the famine belonged to the labouring classes, but the percentage of cultivators on the total number relieved varied from 8 to 10 in districts like Narsinghpur, to 30 per cent. in Mandla. A sprinkling of low caste land-holders of small means was also driven on to the works. It is understood that they generally found employment as mates and occasionally as mubarrirs if literate. In the more acutely affected parts some proprietors in common with their tenants received grants from the Charitable Relief Fund.

By State-ryots I understand that allusion is made to our ryotwari tenants. These men in Baihar and Mandla are as yet singularly destitute, but they have received great assistance from the Government and the Charitable Fund. The result is that the Bhimlat portion of Baihar is now fairly flourishing and the areas allotted for cultivation are increasing. To give the history of these areas would be a long story. Suffice it to say that the tenants are mainly aborigines, that they cultivated at the outset on *ijazat-namas* issued by the Forest Department, and could be ousted practically at will, or were settled by clearance lease-holders who failed to comply with the terms of their agreements. During the last few years the areas have been taken over by the Revenue Department, Forest jurisdiction is being ousted, and cultivation placed in a ring fence. As yet these people have had no chance of amassing wealth, but with sympathetic management and fair seasons they should do well. We want a consistent policy maintained for a series of years, and the tenure must not be dug up from time to time to see how it is taking to the soil. The ryots have already begun to substantially embank their land and to construct irrigation tanks. Land improvement loans should be freely given, and I feel convinced that the bulk will be punctually repaid if seasons prove favourable.

There are also tracts settled ryotwari in Hoshangabad and Nimar. I do not know how these men have emerged from their trials, but in Hoshangabad and East Nimar, relinquishments have been fairly frequent though not more, so I should judge, than in many malguzari villages throughout the Provinces.

299. I beg to invite a perusal of paragraph 43 (Artizans) of Mr. Fuller's review on the progress of the Central Provinces for 30 years (1892).

301. I have no previous experience upon which to draw for a contrast, but many people, *especially the aborigines*, were *most strongly* averse to going to a poor-house. Their aversion is said to have been grounded on the belief that if they died, they would be buried by a sweeper. I can give one instance which seems to me very much in point. In January 1897 I was journeying from Balaghat to Seoni *vid* Bargi at. I was met on the road by a starved-looking widow woman with 5 children of different ages in an emaciated condition. They asked for alms. I replied that I would feed them that day and take them along with me to the Seoni poor-house. The Gondin refused to go, saying that she had daily to pour libations to her God under the pipal tree and that his anger would descend upon her if she neglected this office. After much parleying, in which she stood her ground (in spite of the argument that by acting as she did she was murdering her children), I ordered a cart to be brought and the children deposited therein. This step succeeded, the tigress followed her whelps into my camp. Next day the same procedure was repeated and the whole party was safely landed in the Seoni poor-house, where I visited her after a couple of days. She then professed herself profoundly grateful and alluded to the comfort she derived from the fact that her children received regular meals.

302. There is no doubt that during the past few years much jewellery, etc., has been sold. I have no figures to quote, but a lot of gold was transmitted from Saugor to Bombay, through the Post-office, after the two years of rust 1893-94 and 1894-95 when the agricultural classes were getting embarrassed. In 1895-96 I learnt that a number of brass pots were exported from Bilaspur to the North-West Provinces along the Katni branch. These vessels were bought up cheap from impoverished cultivators for sale after being remodelled.

There can be no doubt, whatsoever, that the fall in the value of silver jewellery made people reluctant to sell it. Many persons when questioned as to why they starved when they had silver ornaments, replied that now-a-days such articles sold for a mere song; others alleged that a woman could not with decency part with ornaments received from her husband's family.

303. As far as I am aware direct importation of food grains by Government Agency was only undertaken in Mandla and in Balaghat with reference to the Baihar Tahsil. From all I can gather in regard to the latter tract, food stocks were quite exhausted, and but for the action taken by Government, the mortality would have been appalling. I have no information as to how the activity of local grain dealers was stimulated.

304. The answer to this question must surely depend in the first place upon whether Government could procure from abroad and lay down in the Central Provinces grain which will not only be consumed but also digested by the people, at 8½ or 9 seers to the rupee. Burma rice was sold, I gather, at marts along the railway line at 7½ to 8 seers to the rupee for the best part of the famine period. But perhaps I am proceeding on a wrong assumption, and Government would not seek to recover the actual cost of the grain. Any loss on the transaction would be taken against famine expenditure, and Government would sell on the works at a fixed rate graduated possibly according to the pitch of prices in the vicinity, but kept somewhat below this range.

If grain was cheaper on the works than elsewhere, people would be unduly encouraged to come to them. The coolies would purchase not only for themselves but clandestinely for friends and relations. It is conceivable that each coolie on the works would do a little business on his own account purchasing from the Government stocks and retailing to his constituents. When there are 4,000 or 5,000 persons on a work and restrictions as to the amount each individual might purchase would presumably be very difficult to enforce. Such a measure would then, as I appreciate the situation, tend to increased expenditure on the part of the State on relief. The prices of food-grains in the bazars or open markets might be for the time being kept down, but the activity of private trade would, I apprehend, be very soon paralysed, and it is very questionable whether in the end the population generally of the affected tracts would not

be worse off than under a policy of non-interference. Such consideration as I have been able to accord to the matter has strengthened my conviction that non-interference and the removal of all obstructions is the right course to pursue. To the stimulation of private trade, if this be required, I see no objection whatsoever, and the rendering available to the public of all information that may be to hand as to the range of prices in various parts is a step to be commended. But the merchants naturally feel the pulse of the country much quicker than Government officials. Our ignorance as to local food-stocks is very great, and the difficulty of obtaining accurate information is admitted on all sides. The tahsil Kanungo goes to the Kachhi for his price quotations and not the Kachhi to the Kanungo. Prices are said to have gone up to 4 or 5 seers in the rupee in the Pandaria zamindari and Kawardha during the rains. Here it would appear that the Mungeli Kachhis (I understand there is a great dearth of local traders in these out-of-the-way tracts) failed to gauge adequately the situation during the hot weather, and transport of grain in the rains was a matter of extreme difficulty, the road (a *kacha* one) passing through a black soil country with nalas difficult for carts to negotiate during the monsoon. The only solution I have to suggest is the opening out of such portions of the country by roads or light railways. Indeed, next to the Gondia-Jabalpur line, I consider that a line tapping the rich black soil country to the west of the Sheonath is one of our most urgent requirements in the Central Provinces at the present time. I have recently had occasion to lay my views on this subject before the Chief Commissioner in another communication, wherein I advocated the construction of a loop-line from Dongargarh on the Bengal-Nagpur Railway *viâ* Chhuikhadan, Gondia, Lohara, Kawardha, Pandaria, Mungeli to the Bilaspur junction. *Mr. L. S. Carey.*

Under such circumstances, the import trade in times of scarcity could, I think, be safely left to the local merchants, who would do the work much better than Government could.

The only case in which departure from these principles would be, in my opinion, expedient, would arise if food-stocks throughout India were exhausted. Such a state of affairs seems, however, hardly conceivable, and the course of prices would surely give adequate warning to enable importation from abroad to be undertaken.

Written statement of evidence by Rai Bahadur KALIDAS CHAUDHARI, *Pleader, Hoshangabad.*

I am asked to set forth my views in writing on the following points, namely :—

I. The degree of success which has attended the measures adopted during the recent famine, considered primarily with regard to the relief of distress and the saving of life, and, secondarily, with regard to economy.

II. The measures and methods of working which seem likely to prove most effective in future in these two respects.

III. Other recommendations thought likely to be useful in future famines.

I. Famine relief in these Province consisted of the following measures principally :—

(*a*) Relief works in the shape of road-work and metal collection were opened on the self-acting test principle, so as to make necessity the only motive for the workers coming on the relief works.

(*b*) Kitchens were established for the feeding of children of starving parents and for adult dependents of relief workers.

(*c*) Poor-houses were opened for persons unfit for work and for those who, though fit for work, refused to work.

(*d*) Gratuitous relief was given to the village poor under section 34 of the Famine Code, in the shape of money or gain doles.

By these measures acute distress which prevailed was mitigated and innumerable lives which would have been lost were saved. If these measures failed in any degree to attain the desired results, it was not because anything was wanting on the part of Government and its officers to see that the distress was fully relieved and every life saved, or because Government was niggardly in spending money, but because there are inherent defects in the measures themselves. To Sir Charles Lyall's Government the people of these Provinces will remain perpetually indebted for what he has done for them at a time when they were dying by thousands for want of a morsel of food which was the greatest calamity that befell them within this century. Of the measures of relief enumerated above the principal and the first one, which consisted of employing the distressed on road-work and collection of metal, forming, as I read the Famine Code, the chief measure recommended by the Famine Commission, was successful so far as it could be so, having regard to the peculiar manners, customs, habits of living and religious and social prejudices of the people of this country. But in my humble opinion there are so many inherent defects in it that it is impossible to rely on it as a safe measure of relief, even if great care were taken by Government to make it successful. In the same way it is I think impracticable to carry it out economically. The system is faulty for the following, among other, reasons, namely :—

(1) The collection of so many men as 10,000 in some places, most of whom are not accustomed to the hardships of exposure to extreme cold or heat and to other discomforts, in spite of the hutting and medical arrangements, is attended with danger to their lives arising from slight causes or from epidemics which may break out at any moment and which actually did break out in several places, causing loss of hundreds of lives. *Rai Bahadur Kalidas Chaudhri.*

(2) Many of the workers are forced to remain at the relief works, leaving behind them their homes, which are left unguarded or uncared for in their absence, and which they find desolate or demolished after their return from works.

(3) It does not in any manner provide (barring the rule of necessity which in India owing to our peculiar manners and customs need not apply to all) against fraud on the public treasury by persons who would not have come on the relief works but came there solely for the purpose of gain. In a family consisting of several members who depend upon cultivation, some of them may remain at home carrying on their usual work, and others may come to the relief works to earn some money, though but for the relief works opened in or near their villages they would not have gone away to distant places to earn it.

(4) It affords many opportunities of misappropriation of public money by the subordinate officials of the State and others entrusted with the supervision and carrying out of the works.

My information, which I have every reason to believe, is that in many cases more men were shown on the rolls as workers than there were actually present; that articles were purchased at small prices and charged to Government at enormously high prices, that in the supply of copper coins to the works in many cases about 4 per cent profit was made by the suppliers, *e.g.*, the authorised commission was 2½ per cent., and the banias who sold articles of food to the labourers changed the pice into rupees at the rate of 16 annas 1 pice per rupee, this pice being ultimately saddled on the labourers, and that old and bad materials were supplied in place of new and good ones, though the State was charged with prices for the latter.

(5) It does not provide a permanent cure of the malady which afflicts the country from time to time but serves only as a temporary check. No sooner does the check disappear than the malady revives. Famine like a disease has got its stages and requires to be treated from the very root. The cause has to be found out and the remedy directed against it. The opening of road-work for giving employment to the famine-stricken people serves only to appease their hunger for the time but does not strike at the root of the cause. The road-work is intended by the State to facilitate the carrying of food from one place to another at the same time that it affords temporary relief to the people, but I think there must be plenty of food in the land before we should look for the means of carrying it from one place to another. I think the radical cure consists in providing for the production of abundant food-supply in the land. I shall have to say much later on on this subject when answering the second question.

(6) The system of affording relief by opening road-work is very costly. The State has necessarily to spend large sums of money for sheltering the relief workers, for arranging for their medical treatment, for providing the children of the workers with necessaries of life and for supplying the labourers with tools and plant costing alone lakhs of rupees.

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The cost, moreover, of maintaining the roads will be a permanent charge on the State Treasury. It has, above all, to employ a very expensive establishment for the supervision of the works.

(7) Assuming for argument's sake, that the Provincial Government wished to distinguish on the relief works people of their provinces from those of other provinces or of Native States, this system does not afford a means of such distinction.

I have very little to say against the other measures of relief, as I have already said they saved many lives and relieved much distress in spite of the difficulties in their way. The difficulties consisted mainly in inducing people to take advantage of the kitchens and poor-houses on the score of religion and caste. As far as I have been able to ascertain, none of the Hindu tenants of ordinary respectability or their dependents attended the poor-houses or the kitchens. The latter were freely availed of however by the children of the relief workers. The relief by gratuitous payments in money or grain was received with sincere and heartfelt gratitude to the State. It worked well. The only drawback was that in several instances the Patwaris and Revenue Inspectors employed by Government to afford this kind of relief, took advantage of their positions by inducing the recipients to give them a portion of their doles in consideration of their names being brought on the roll of the recipients. This was very much checked however by the Inspecting officers.

II. This question is of great importance. As I am of opinion that in the late famine more money was spent by Government than necessary in affording relief, in consequence of its adopting a method which is radically defective, I venture to suggest, though with great diffidence, for the favourable consideration of the learned experts sitting on this Commission, a method of affording relief to the people of these Provinces economically and without incurring the risks involved in the other system which appears to me to furnish a solution of the famine question. I had better state at once the outlines of my scheme. I wish to suggest :—

(1) That the aid of the people of the Provinces should be largely invoked ; in fact, I wish that the whole of the relief operations, when it will be necessary owing to scarcity or famine to undertake them, should be carried on through their agency.

(2) That the expenditure from the public treasury for carrying on these operations should be devoted solely to the improvement of the land and furnishing it with works of irrigation, to which the first place was assigned by the Famine Commission among the means that could be adopted for giving direct protection from famine arising from drought ; and

(3) That poor-houses should be opened in towns for the aimless wanderers, do-nothing beggars and the homeless incapables, all these operations being carried on under the control of the Executive officers of Government.

It is necessary to point out certain facts before fully explaining my scheme. The facts are these :—

(*a*) In 1880, when the Famine Commission sat to enquire into the causes and remedies of famines, after stating that the devastating famines to which the provinces of India had from time to time been liable, were, in all cases, to be traced directly to the occurrence of seasons of universal drought, the failure of the customary rainfall leading to the failure of food-crops, it was said in regard to these Provinces in paragraph 28 of the first part of their report, that the upper valley of the Nerbudda was exempt from the risk of drought and consequent famine from the abundance and certainty of its rainfall, and about the Provinces as a whole it was said in Chapter I, paragraph 2 of the second part of their report, that no part of British India was freer from any apprehension of the calamity of drought than the Central Provinces. This theory, from our experience of the past few years, we can safely say has most unfortunately for us fallen to the ground.

(*b*) Upon the above theory of abundance and certainty of rainfall the Famine Commission of 1880 based their calculation of the food outturn of our Provinces making it 2¾ million tons for an area of 13 millions of acres being at the rate of ·21 ton or 6 maunds per acre. It was estimated then that the annual consumption of all kinds namely, for food, seed, cattle-food and wastage, was 2½ millions for a population of 8¼ millions, leaving a surplus of about 300,000 tons. At that time the cultivated area was taken to be 15½ millions of acres of which 13 millions were under food-crops.

Turning to the Administration Report of these Provinces for the year 1895-96, page 27, we find that the net area cropped in 1895-96 was 15,807,299 acres. The statistics for 1896-97 are not yet available to the public.

The net area under food-crops in 1895-96 was as follows :—

	1895-96.
Rice	5,00 ,242 acres.
Wheat	2,714,412 ,,
Gram	1,149,024 ,,
Juari	1,408,776 ,,
Other food-grains	3,258,610 ,,
TOTAL	13,591,064 acres.

Thus in 1895-96 we find nearly the same areas under cultivation and under food-crops respectively as the areas in 1880 or about 15 years before, although the population has now increased by about 2¾ millions. The census of 1891 returned the figure 10,784,294 or roughly 10¾ millions. I take a quarter million for the increase of the population during the six years after the census was taken in 1891. Taking the area under food-crops to be 13½ million acres, our food outturn is $2\frac{8}{10\frac{1}{4}}$ or 2⅘ths million tons and our food consumption is $3\frac{1}{2\frac{1}{2}}$ or 3⅕ths million tons or one million tons less than we want.

(*c*) In 1880, the area under irrigation was 777,000 acres or 5 per cent. of the land under cultivation and in 1895-96 we have 767,821 acres, nearly 3,000 acres less than the figure of 1880.

(*d*) The calculations of the Famine Commission about the food consumption of the population and about the surplus quantity left for export to other Provinces were based upon the assumption that the produce of an acre was 6 maunds. This outturn is a variable quantity and must have considerably decreased now, remembering the fact that the soil has become exhausted by repeated cultivation of the same crops. The soil of the Central Provinces was never what we can imagine from the old proverb, "Tickle the land with a hope and it laughs with a harvest." Anything like rotation of crops is not attempted. In some places it is not known at all. In the Hoshangabad district I have personally known the same soil annually cropped with wheat for the past 20 years, and I have not heard that any other crop was ever sown before. There is no system in practice of irrigation, manuring and otherwise improving the land. Admitting, therefore, that 6 maunds was the average outturn of the soil 18 years ago, it must be indisputable now that we are producing food much less than we want, probably about a little over half of what we were producing in 1880 in spite of our having increased in number ; and the inevitable result is that there must be food famine perpetually in the land, if we did not produce more food, or if we did not earn money from other avocations and sources to enable us to purchase it for our consumption.

(*e*) Whilst we are producing less food than we want, we are exporting it in large quantities every year, making it dearer and dearer annually and beyond the reach of the poorer classes of my countrymen, who have been forced to live upon one meal of the coarsest kind of grain or on the dry kernels of mango stones or tamarind seeds, *juar* leaves, roots of trees, grass seeds, oil cakes and other things not meant for human consumption.

I wish to append the following table from an official report, showing the average prices of the principal food grains during the past few years in rupees per maund :—

Food-grains.	1893-94.	1894-95.	1895-96.	1896-97.	Highest in 1896-97.
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Wheat . .	2 11 0	2 7 0	2 10 0	3 8 0	4 4 0
Gram and pulse .	1 14 0	2 1 0	2 6 0	3 2 0	3 12 0
Juar and bajra .	1 14 0	2 1 0	2 0 0	2 12 0	3 12 0
Husked rice .	3 4 0	3 4 0	3 6 0	4 0 0	4 6 0

I am unable to give the average prices of the famine year 1897, but they must be considerably more than those of the preceding year of scarcity.

(*f*) The Central Provinces are a purely agricultural country. The prosperity and happiness of the people are bound up with a prosperous agriculture. From the Census Reports of 1891 we find that nearly 75 per cent. of its population depend directly or indirectly on the cultivation of the soil, namely, the cultivators, the labourers in the fields and those who have other occupations but have combined cultivation with them. The number of the last is only about 9 per cent., so that out of every four persons in these Provinces three are agriculturists. In 1891 there were 125 persons to a square mile here, and now there are at the most 127 persons, as I think the population has increased by a quarter of a million. According to the conclusions of the former Commission, Bengal with its population of 471 persons to a square mile (I include Behar, Orissa and Chota Nagpur) can maintain its population for 26 years without a famine. The North-Western Provinces (including Oudh), the Punjab and Bombay (including Sindh) with populations of 436 persons, of 189 persons and 151 persons, respectively, to a square mile, can maintain their populations for 11 years without a famine, and Madras with 252 persons to a square mile can maintain its population for 12 years without having to encounter that calamity. At this rate our Provinces with a population of only 127 persons to a square mile ought to enjoy perpetual immunity from famine, but still we have got it in its worst form affecting the whole of the Provinces. I think that agriculture, the only occupation of the people in these Provinces, is in an extremely depressed condition.

(*g*) Leaving aside the figures in the statistics, which are compiled mostly from information furnished in the beginning by unskilful subordinate ministerial agency of Government, statistics which being themselves inaccurate must lead to wrong conclusions—there is a universal belief in these Provinces that the outturn of our fields has very much gone down, so much so, that in a tolerably good year, it is with difficulty that the Government demand can be met. It does not appear how the payment of the Government demand, including the cesses, was provided for by the former Commission in their calculation of the food outturn of the land. The food consumption was detailed under the heads of (1) food, (2) seed, (3) cattle food and (4) wastage.

Possibly the payment of Government demand was provided for from the consumption of non-food-crops.

The general belief that the outturn has diminished is strengthened by the fact that those who depend solely upon agriculture are deeply in debt, whether malguzars or tenants. The mahajan, or the agricultural banker, who supplies food and seed to the agriculturists, is in his turn not free from debt. There is a continuity and endlessness of indebtedness throughout the country until it reaches a point when the State has to step in to help the whole population by remitting or suspending the revenue, and by pouring out money from the public treasury to feed the people in distress. The depletion of the public treasury is a calamity which must seriously affect the whole population, for it cripples the powers of the State by depriving it of the means of carrying on its useful work tending to the welfare of the people. It is in itself a sort of State indebtedness. Being the malguzar of a small village of about 1,200 acres and having a farm of about 200 acres I can add my personal testimony to the correctness of the belief entertained by the people of these Provinces that the produce of our fields has very considerably decreased. I cannot get now from my fields even half of what I used to get 15 years ago, deducting of course the expenses incidental to cultivation. After several disappointments I have now taken to irrigating my field. From the above facts, I venture to think that we must pay our most careful attention to the greater development of the resources of the land upon which alone we live. The Land Improvement Act has not worked well by reason of its provisions being unpopular. The malguzars as a rule are unwilling to give their consent to Government loans because they think that by doing so they will postpone the payments of the rents due to them after the loans are discharged, which may be an indefinite time. Under the Act it is difficult for the ordinary tenants, who form the majority of our cultivators, to obtain loans as they have no security to give for them.

The continual agricultural disasters have made us poor, and we have no capital to enable us to make the best of our land by providing it with means of irrigation, and by improving it in other respects without the help of the State, of which the agricultural population of the province is the most essential part. The State and the landed classes, including the labourers, are dependent on each other for their welfare, and the one cannot exist without the help of the other. The British Government has been spending millions of rupees for our welfare in various ways. It has saved us from the havocs of several famines. The late famine was the 39th in the country, counting from 1769, and was more calamitous than any of its predecessors, because it affected the whole country from one end to the other, and Government has in all of them tried the same methods of relief to save us by spending enormous amounts from its treasury, but it has succeeded in giving us relief only and no cure. The spectre of famine is perpetually sucking our blood and baffling the attempts of Government to save us from its grasp. It retires for a time but re-appears with its horrid giggles. It is therefore my humble prayer that the methods adopted hitherto should undergo a radical change, and that the road-making system of relief which is mainly resorted to, should be supplanted by other methods which should be more popular and afford us greater facilities of producing our food, of which we are very much short of the required quantity. The road-work should come after we have got enough of food in the land to carry from one place to another. We have already got a sufficient number of roads which are certainly more than we had before the British Rule. Supplemented by the railways in the country, the construction of more roads is not a keen want as is evidenced by nearly the same level of prices everywhere in the province. In respect of roads we are better off than the bigger provinces. Bengal has a mile of road metalled and unmetalled to nearly 1,900 persons of its population. North-Western Provinces including Oudh, to nearly 1,600 persons, Madras also to 1,600 persons, and the Central Provinces 1 mile to 1,400 persons. If it be considered that the self-acting labour test works more satisfactorily on the road-work system of affording relief, then I would humbly submit that this test is not an absolutely safe guide in India, where a man, by reason of the peculiar fabric of society to which he belongs, would prefer death to submitting to necessity and joining the relief works. Here a penniless Brahman values himself, and is as a matter of fact valued more than his affluent neighbour of lower caste. Moreover, in the methods which I suggest below, this test need not be abandoned nor relaxed.

I now beg to propose the following measures and methods of working in times of distress and famine, which seem to be likely to prove most effective and economical in relieving distress and saving lives, in lieu of the methods of employing men on road-works.

Our units of operations should be circles or groups of villages, their area and extent being dependent on the population which can be conveniently managed. Already we have got divisions of districts into tahsils which we can sub-divide again into groups of villages to be called circles. We have also the circles of villages for the purposes of the Local Boards. We have, moreover, divisions of districts into police out-posts. We can take advantage of one of these divisions of the district in which famine or distress is prevalent. We should then appoint committees of malguzars, respectable tenants, money-lenders and patwaris

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with presidents and secretaries elected by the members or nominated by Government for each of these divisions or circles. When it is decided by Government to start the relief operations, an allotment should be made for the relief of inhabitants of each of the circles or groups of villages over which the Committees will have control having regard to their population and needs.

The Committees and their operations shall be controlled by the Deputy Commissioner of the district in which the famine prevails. The aims and objects of the Committees shall be :—

A. To grant relief to the needy inhabitants of their respective jurisdictions by giving them employment or otherwise.

B. When relief is granted in lieu of labour, to use the labour on improving the agricultural capacities of the villages in the circles.

It shall be the duty of each Committee to divide the population within its jurisdiction into :—

(1) Those who are capable of working and are not entitled to relief without working.

(2) Those who are unfit for work and should be relieved.

(3) Those who are fit for work but ought not to be forced to work by reason of their position in society or the custom of the country, such as the respectable poor and the *parda-nashin*, etc.

(4) The village beggars.

It shall also be the duty of each Committee, in concurrence with the Deputy Commissioner of the district, to lay down how much money out of the allotment is to be spent for—

(1) sinking wells and tanks, embanking fields, uprooting kass grass and other improvements of the village,

(2) for affording other relief to the inhabitants as detailed above.

For the poor of the towns gratuitous relief measures, namely, poor-houses and gifts of money or grain doles, should be organised on the basis of the Famine Code. To each poor-house there should be an orphanage attached. There should be a simple set of accounts on the advance recoupment system, and the Government officials should check them now and then. The ordinary Public Works Department works, for which provision has already been made in the year's budget, may be undertaken at the same time, but should in no way induce the villagers to leave their village works and join the Public Works Department works for higher wages.

and are not in any [illegible] of the system which I advocate, advantages are numerous :— [illegible]ive or complete. The

(1) Relief will reach the distressed in their [illegible] and at their homes.

(2) The chance of misappropriation of the State money will be reduced to a minimum, for it is difficult to misappropriate when there are so many people interested in seeing it properly spent. Misappropriation is easier for an individual than for a corporation.

(3) The people will be grateful for being taken into confidence, and will greatly appreciate the benefits of the State help.

(4) Money spent in improvement of land will secure regular payment of Government revenue which it will never be necessary to suspend or remit, and will also make the position of the landholders benefited infinitely better than now.

(5) The result of the expenditure being the increasing of the productive power of the soil, the chance of famine recurring will be very much minimised.

(6) This system will be much more economical than the other one, as the employment of so many officials, the making of huts, the arrangement for medical attendance and the establishment of kitchens for the children will not be necessary.

(7) Under this system there will be no danger of any epidemic breaking out. If it does break out it will be of a general character affecting the whole locality.

(8) It will provide occupation to every man really in need of relief, for the local knowledge and experience of the Committee will be very useful in eliminating the really needy from those who are in no need of relief.

(9) It has the advantage of preventing a distress developing into famine if started at the distress stage.

(10) Relief operations under this system will enable us to distinguish our own men from those belonging to other Provinces or Native States, for *ex hypothesi* we have made provision for the relief of every person standing in need of relief in our villages.

(11) It will prevent various modes of relief now adopted over-lapping one another in their operations.

(12) It will not involve the State in a permanent charge on the treasury for maintenance, such as the road-making system will.

There are two main objections to this system, namely :—

(1) At the cost of public money private property should not be improved.

(2) The people through whom the relief operations are proposed to be carried out are not yet public-spirited enough and cannot therefore be trusted.

With regard to the first objection, I have only to ask who the public are in these Provinces if not the agriculturists and their dependents ? We have seen that the agriculturists number 75 per cent. of the population. The villages are partly the property of the State, which has a vested interest in them. It has a direct interest in the improvement of the land in order that it may secure the regular payment of the revenue. It is alike for the benefit of the Government indirectly, as for that of the landed classes directly, that I propose the expenditure of the public money. I beg to point out in this connection that Government has already abandoned the objection by directing the inclusion in the programme of relief works of a list of work or operations specially intended for the relief of the agricultural population in the vicinity of their villages. These works it is laid down should consist of agricultural works calculated to increase the outturn of the proximate harvest or harvests, *e.g.*, the construction of wells, the digging and clearing of village tanks and the construction of village reservoirs. Other agricultural works are also recommended [*vide* Central Provinces Famine Code, Section VI, Clause II (A)]. It is now too late to raise this objection.

As regards the next objection, it was raised by the Famine Commission in 1880 in paragraph 110 of the first part of their report. They said: "In England it has been considered that the economical administration of public charity is best secured by placing the responsibility for relief directly upon those who have to pay for it, and who from their [illegible] knowledge are in the best position to judge in each system has ever [illegible] whether assistance is required. No such present condition [illegible] adopted in India, or could in the disastrous failure. [illegible] of the country be adopted without risk of be dealt with and [illegible], where limited numbers have to officials, it may be possible is [illegible]erous and sufficient staff of the circumstances of every [illegible] to ascertain by personal enquiry for the purpose of admitting [illegible] applicant for relief, sufficiently in an Indian Famine the Gover[illegible] rejecting his claim. But [illegible] has to deal not with limited numbers, etc., etc." The objection did not arise exactly in the form in which it is raised now. The question before us is whether in small areas Committees of persons directly interested in the improvement of the villages in which they live could not be trusted. The objection was raised 18 years ago. But the circumstances have altered since then. The principles of Local Self-Government have been tried and found successful. Not a single case of misappropriation of public money by the members of the District or Municipal Boards has been heard of. Assuming there were a case or two, but that would only prove the rule of universal honesty amongst the members. Education has made great progress since 1880, and public spirit has been evoked. Then again it is more difficult for a Committee of persons to defraud than for individuals. Now the bulk of the work and the more important details of it are done for Government by mates, gang moharrirs and patwaris, who possess neither local knowledge nor education, nor have an interest in their work, except drawing their salaries from

Government; but a Local Committee without expecting any remuneration from Government will act more honestly and much better, because they have got a direct interest. If, moreover, there is a discount of public spirit in the land, it is the duty of the enlightened Government to evoke it, and it cannot be better evoked and encouraged than by giving the people work in which they are directly interested. In the late distribution of charitable money, the help of the people was very largely taken. Committees and Sub-Committees of malguzars and mahajans were formed, and I know, having been the Secretary to the Committee of my District, that no complaints were made regarding any misappropriation by the members. There were some complaints against the patwaris, but they were very few. The reason of the success was that the aid of the people was very largely taken and gladly offered.

If, for any weighty reason, it is not possible to adopt this system the present method, in practice, should in the alternative be adhered to, but as far as possible in combination with that suggested by me. From Mr. Higham's notes, paragraph 13, I find that in Jabalpur and Damoh very useful works, comprising the construction or deepening of village tanks, diversions of the courses of *nullahs*, making of *kutcha* wells and the extirpation of kans grass from the black soil land were done by the State with the public money, whilst the road work was also going on. So long as the agricultural improvements are not completed I suggest that the method of famine relief by means of road-work and metal collection should be undertaken to a small extent, while the greater part of the money, which the State can afford to spare for relieving the distressed, should be devoted to agricultural operations.

III. On this point I beg to suggest that we should not wait for the development of the famine in future, before undertaking the operations intended to serve as affording relief to the distressed. If the measures and methods I have submitted for the consideration of the Commission are commenced at the outset of a well recognised distress, they will prevent its deepening into the acute stage. It is not at all difficult to plan out a relief programme with a view to help the landed classes, and to promote the agricultural prospects on the lines I have indicated above. Timely remedial measures are attended with great many advantages resulting in the end in saving much money and many lives.

Written answers to the Commission's questions by Rai Bahadur KALIDAS CHAUDHARI, *Pleader, Hoshangabad.*

* 273. In the Hoshangabad district the well-to-do labourers and artizans ordinarily use wheat and gram as their staple food, but at the harvests when they get wheat for their wages, it being copiously sown in this district, they use it for about three months, *i.e.*, April, May and June. In the town of Hoshangabad not less than 12 annas of the population live upon wheat and rice, and the rest on various kinds of grain. Out in the country wheat and jowar constitute the staple food of about 10 annas of the population, the rest six annas using other kinds of grains and pulses, such as juar, kodo, kutki, mung, tur, sama and makka. Wheat, generally speaking, is used as a luxury by the poorer classes on occasions of festivity.

274. They eat twice in the day. Each meal is attended with dal and cheap vegetables. Their drink is simple water. When they take kodo, kutki or sama, they mix it sometimes with *mahi*.

275. If any of the ordinary food-grains happen to be unprocurable, those who habitually use wheat substitute for it juar and bajri, and those using juar and bajri ordinarily substitute kodo, kutki, sama, coarse rice, and pulse, etc.

276. Juar, sama and kutki are liked but not kodo.

277. I do not know of other grains than those mentioned by me above.

278 and 279. When we started a poor-house in the town of Hoshangabad by subscriptions we used to give the inmates wheat bread and pulse only once, but when Government took over the poor-house they used to get two meals a day—in the morning at 10 A.M. *khichri* (mixture of rice and pulse boiled) and in the evening about 5 P.M. juar bread and dal (pulse), together with a little ghi and some vegetables. I have not seen what food was given in the kitchens.

280. The inmates used to complain of insufficiency of their meals. There were no complaints about the plan of the meals. *Rai Bahadur Kalidas Chaudhri.*

281. Jail diet is considered to be better on the whole.

282. I think the high level of prices was due to want of sufficient stocks of food in the whole country. We produced on the whole less food than usual, and a portion of wheat we had of the previous years. Though in the previous years also the production was short of the required quantity we exported. I do not think that in the country as a whole there was enough grain to meet all probable contingencies.

283. I do, especially as regards countries of gold currency to which we export. Prices rise for want of sufficient quantity for consumption in a given locality. The rise or fall varies considerably in proportion as there are good or bad harvests in a given locality and its surrounding localities. Within the last 20 years there have been fluctuations of prices.

283-A. In British territories the rates were nearly the same, but in the Native States of Bhopal, Indore and Gwalior, which border on this district, the prices were much less, in fact the grains were selling there at nearly less than half the prices ruling here, because the Native States had stopped exportation of food-grains. They also took away some of our grains.

284. The small dealers had no capital and the grain-dealers as a rule were afraid of ultimately incurring losses in the trade.

285. The town people and the villagers who had money but no private stocks of their own, could buy their customary food-grains and condiments but at little higher prices than the nearest grain marts.

286. I have heard they were able to buy but sometimes at higher prices, *i.e.*, when the grain-dealers had to come from long distances.

287. Yes. It was due to still higher prices elsewhere.

288. I cannot say about fortunes, but large profits were made in this district by some traders who had stored grain beforehand. In one case a large quantity of wheat was sold to a grain merchant of Agra, the consequence of which was that the prices rose immediately after. The transactions were all genuine and not time bargain speculations.

289. As far as I know, all were depleted with the exception of a very few who purchased grain at high prices which were ruling during the famine, but which came down afterwards on the kharif crops appearing successful.

290. In the first place, every cultivator and malguzar had surplus stocks, and secondly, they generally sold them.

291. Yes.

292. Yes.

293. To the extent that the produce of the land has diminished. I know as a matter of experience of 20 years that people who used to store grain in pits in large quantities formerly have ceased to do so for several years past owing to agricultural depletion or insufficient outturn of land. I can name several of such men in my district.

294. Yes, yes.

295. The extent I am unable to calculate, but I can say that every one of these classes that asked for relief, got it.

296. Tenants and beggars.

297. Want of money. Yes, because everything in these Provinces depends upon a prosperous agriculture.

298. No. On the contrary, went down; labour was very cheap and people were in want of money to hire labour.

299. Yes, *e.g.*, the weavers. I am not prepared to answer this question thoroughly.

300, 301 and 302. I am unable to compare.

303. The question is difficult and I am not prepared to answer it. But I think it is impossible to lower the prices.

304. In this district large quantities of rice came from Burma. In ordinary years it does not come to this district as far as I have been able to ascertain.

305. I am not prepared to answer the first part of this question. As to the second part I would certainly favour import of large quantities by Government for the use of poor-houses and relief works, but the prices should be less than those ruling in the district at the time. This will reduce the prices in the whole district otherwise the advantage is very little.

*The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

Rai Bahadur Onkar Das.

Written answers to the Commission's questions by Rai Bahadur ONKAR DAS, *of Seoni.*

*140. In my opinion no harm was done to the supply of private labour by opening of the relief-works. Fortunately the opening of relief works saved lives innumerable and helped in not allowing them to be lazy when they became penniless. Had the relief-works not been opened, the labouring classes would have been forced to sell their household property to provide themselves with food. Had this not been done, the people would have become lazy and reduced to utter poverty,—so much so, that they would have never regained their former status in life. Relief-works should be directed towards improving agricultural and sanitary measures, which are essential for the existence of human lives. Such works should be opened, as were done during the recent famine in the ryotwari villages of this district, which not only afforded means of labour to the people, but also made permanent improvements in agricultural lands. Health also improved considerably, and owing to this they were not compelled to leave their homestead. It would be better if a general scheme of works to be done in a village, or groups of villages, be kept prepared, for future guidance, like the Provincial schemes for large works, such as roads, canals, etc., which already exist.

141. There was no necessity to revise rates of labour either before or after the opening of relief-works. Labour was paid as usual even during the famine. After the close of relief-works, the rates of labour were regulated according to standard of works performed. The low-paid labourers yielded a less outturn of work in comparison, owing to the fact that they could not get food sufficient to keep up their strength. The rates of labour before and after famine are as follows:—

	as.	p.	
Male Beldar	2	0	per day.
Female Beldar	1	6	,,
Children	1	0	,,
Rates during Famine—			
Male Beldar	1	6	,,
Female Beldar	1	3	,,
Boys	0	9	,,

142 and 143. Relief-works did not interfere with private works. On the other hand, people were kept back from committing crimes which would have been a source of great anxiety and loss to general public. No complaint was lodged to any officer-in-charge about the want of labourers.

144. Without relief-works, private works would not have saved their lives or those of their dependants, as thousands of people of the agricultural class, with their dependants, resorted to relief-works.

145 and 147. The following relief-works were opened in this district during famine:

(1) Department Public Works Relief-works.

(2) Relief-works in Ryotwari villages, where people got work at their own houses.

(3) Famine Loan Work.

(4) Poor-Houses.

(5) Village Relief-work.

(6) Kitchens for Orphans.

(7) The Police, which assisted in sending starving wanderers to relief-works.

(8) Relieving at their own houses the respectable and *purda nashin* who were reduced to poverty.

(9) Charitable relief to indigent cultivators.

(10) Forest concessions for obtaining minor produce free of duty.

I would propose that the abovementioned works from 5 to 10 should be started immediately after there are signs of famine. The control of these works would involve very little expenditure, as Revenue officers could easily look to it. Relief in forms 5 to 8 and 10 abovementioned are preferable to poor-house relief, as they would be less expensive, less risky and will not afford a chance to officials to commit misappropriation. The supply of cooked food in poor-houses, though less costly than raw grain, is objectionable. The maintenance of a poor-house entails greater responsibility on the officials in charge than the other forms of relief. In my opinion, the opening of poor-houses should be lastly resorted to. Village-reliefs at home have many advantages. People can maintain themselves and their dependants, with ease, and at a comparatively less cost than at the relief-works. They can keep up their house intact. If labour is needed, it can best be afforded as in item (2) above. This would enable people to get work at home and improve their lands. If more labour is needed, item No. 3 should be resorted to.

Public Works Department relief-works should only be started lastly, but the control of expenditure should be in the hands of Civil officers.

146. Lowering of grain rates would not obviate the necessity of resorting to private relief-works, because bad crop means loss of money and capital. At such times the establishment of relief-works is a necessity, at any rate.

273. People eat the same kind of food all the year round. In cold weather agricultural well-to-do labourers and artisans eat *juar*, provided the yield is good. Other people use wheat and rice, also *birra*. The only difference is that lower classes make gruel (*pej*) of one seer grain with which they barely support 10 bellies. In villages and towns, one seer of grain supports two people, their meal consisting of wheat bread and rice. During the famine, prices of different kinds of grain are on the same level. The poor people in villages make use of the cheapest quality of grain available, such as common rice, broken rice (*kanki*), *teora*, *batra*, pulses, etc, etc., and the well-to-do consume wheat and rice of superior quality.

274. They used to take two meals in the day. The meal of the poor people consisting of gruel (*pej or lachka*), salt *bhaji*, chilli, while the well-to-do fed themselves with rice and *dhâl-bhat* and bread and vegetables.

275. and 276. When wheat and rice, the ordinary food-grains of people, are unprocurable during famine, the people, then fall back upon inferior food-grains, such as *kodo*, *kutki* *juar*, *teora*, etc., etc., and when the latter even are not procurable, they feed themselves with jungle produce, such as fruits, grass, leaves, etc., etc., as was the case in the recent famine. Half of the famine stricken people of this district fed themselves for some time by eating all sorts of forest and other produce mixed with rice and wheat, *gurlu* and *jhurjhur*, which are grown on old fallow lands, were used as food during the famine, whereas in times of prosperity they are eaten only by cattle. And when wheat, rice and gram, etc., etc., and jungle fruits, etc., etc., become scarce, they depend on Indian millet. Rice is light and easy to digest; whereas gram, *batra*, pulse and other forest produce are not so easily digestible.

277. In hard times people have to subsist on any produce that they can find which, in prosperous times, they would not even feed their cattle with.

278. I was in charge of the Seoni Poor-house and also of some of the kitchens where the cheapest sort of wheat and rice were used for food.

279. In poor-houses the inmates were fed five times a day; whereas in kitchens, twice a day:—

(1) Rice *kanji* in the morning, made of one seer of powder-rice, boiled with 32 seers of water, the produce of which was only 28 seers, which were served to 56 persons.

(2) Second meal at 10 A.M., consisted of *dhâl-bhat*, vegetables. All sorts of *dhâls* were cooked, sometimes separately and sometimes altogether mixed up. Vegetables were fried in ghee or oil. Ghee was also used in rice.

(3) The third meal was given at 5 P.M., which consisted of a tin-potful (about ¼ seer in weight) of gruel (*pej*). It is prepared by mixing one seer of rice with 5 seers of water, and when boiled, the yield was only 4 seers. Salt and molasses were occasionally used.

The weakly and emaciated were given *sago kanji*, mixed with milk and sugar, twice a day, at 8 A.M. and 4 P.M. in addition to the above diets.

In kitchens two meals of *khichri* (dhâl and rice) were served during the day, one at 10 A.M. and the other at 5 P.M. The *khichri* was prepared in accordance with the instructions received in the Commissioner Mr. Fuller's letter No. 8163, dated 27th July 1897.

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

281. (*Vide* Statement attached.)

Comparative statement of Scale of diet in Poor-house and Jail.

Description of grain food.	Daily diet in Jail.			Daily diet in Poor-house.					Remarks.
	Class I, Labourers.	Class II, Ordinary.	Class III, females.	Class I, Male.	Class II, Female.	Class III, Children.			
						3 to 7 years.	7 to 10 years.	10 to 14 years.	
				Chtk.	Chtk.	Chtk.	Chtk.	Chtk.	
Mixture of atta of wheat and juar.	20 oz.	16 oz.	14 oz.						
Mixture of juar and gram	22 ,,	18 ,,	16 ,,	8	7	2	4	6	Either of these.
Rice	22 ,,	18 ,,	16 ,,						
Oil	½ ,,	½ ,,	½ ,,	⅛	⅛	1/24	1/12	⅛	Oil or ghee.
Salt	½ ,,	½ ,,	½ ,,	⅛	⅛	1/24	1/12	⅛	
Condiments . . .	40 gr.	40 gr.	40 gr.	¼	¼	1/16	⅛	16	
Vegetables . . .	6 oz.	6 oz.	6 oz.						
Dhal	4 ,,	4 ,,	4 ,,	1	1	½	½	¾	
Morning meal . .	3 ,,	4 ,,	4 ,,						In the morning the poor-house inmates were given *kanji*, the patients in hospital were given sago with milk and sugar between 8 and 9 A.M. besides *kanji*.
Goor . . .	1 ,,	4 ,,	4 ,,	...	...	...	...	...	
Rice meal instead of bread	4 ,,	4 ,,	4 ,,						
Goor	...	1 ,,	1 ,,						

282 The famine of 1896-97 was not only in my district but was throughout India, excluding some tracts. Before commencement of famine in almost all the tracts of India and in this district the crops began to fail continually one after the other for the last three years. In some districts the crops failed totally, while in others it gave a very poor outturn, the result being that the stock of grain which persons had in their hands was almost all used up before the commencement of famine, and what little was remaining was used up during famine. I have no reason whatsoever to doubt that grain was exported from this district partly owing to the failure of crops in other districts, and partly to the falling in of prices in others. It is evident that thousands of maunds of Burma rice, wheat from Kamptee and Chhindwara, gram and pulse from Jabalpur, masur and *teora* from Kamptee, were imported into the district which saved the lives of many. Besides this I have nothing to add.

283. For sake of comparison I append a comparative statement* for 20 years showing the rise and fall in the average prices of staple food-grain prevailing in the district. It is clear from experience, and also from perusal of public newspapers, that the prices of staple food-grain have been continually falling. The fall in prices has not been in a particular kind of grain, but has been in general in staple food-grain. The fall in prices was not sudden, but as crops decayed the prices, too, fell. The rising and falling off in the value of gold and silver did affect the average price of staple food-grain—a fact which can be easily proved that when in days of prosperity a man had to spend Re. 1-4-0 for preparing an ornament worth one rupee, but during famine when silver became cheap the man had to sell the ornament for half the price, *i.e*, out of 20 annas for which one could purchase 12 seers of grain could only realise 10 annas for which he purchased 6 seers of grain.

283-A. As I could not procure the price current for the surrounding country, I am not in a position to explain the changes that occurred in prices.

284. The grain-dealers of this district as well as of the surrounding country were not so active during famine as they were before. The only reason that I can assign to this is that grain was not exported to other districts and the dealers purchased very little quantity of grain that was sufficient for consumption. They were afraid of their property being *looted* on their way; and secondly, of the prices that were changing every day. Merchandise in this district depends mostly on crop, and the transaction cannot be considered active as long as there is no export. In my opinion famine is the chief cause of all this mishap.

285 and 286. Persons residing in villages as well as in towns purchased staple food-grain during famine from Seoni town and from the big markets held in large villages and saved their lives. There is no doubt that with the exception of persons living in cities and those near the big markets, villagers procured grain at a dearer rate.

287. Among the staple food-grains there is no other grain than the Burma rice that was exported from a place where there was no famine. Besides other grain that was imported in Seoni from Nagpur, Chhindwara and Kamptee, etc., etc., was from districts that suffered from the curse of famine. When there was a fall in prices, persons of small capital could not purchase much grain. The only reason is that persons could not foresee that there will be a severe famine, and that they should purchase large quantity of grain and sell it during famine according to the prices ruling.

288. Neither any person gained much in trade during famine on account of the fall in prices, nor they enriched themselves.

The grain-dealers also purchased and exported very little grain in which they did not gain what they should normally derive.

289. As far as I am aware, there is no large stock of grain in villages or with traders, etc.

290, 291 and 292. In this distressed district some malguzars as well as cultivators had somewhat surplus stock of grain with them, but on account of the continual failure of crops for the last three years it was all used up. It is doubted whether they had any surplus quantity in their stock which they could have sold at times when required. In 1897, the crops yielded a very poor outturn, some cultivators and some malguzars sold at Kamptee at various prices what little they had in stock after keeping for seed grain and for their daily consumption.

293. No stock of grain was stored in grain-pits (*bandas*) for future seed grain and consumption, because what little outturn the crops gave was not even sufficient for daily support.

294. The newly-constructed roads have made the trade much easier, but as long as there will be no railway communications, the trade will remain as it is.

295. According to the census of 1891, the population of the district is 371,000. Out of this, as far as I hear, about 2 lakhs of people suffered from the ravages of famine. Out of 2 lakhs, 75,000 were tenants, absolute occupancy malguzars, plough-servants, etc., who got relief from relief-works, and they were fit subjects for relief.

* Not printed.

Rai Bahadur Onkar Das.

296. Those who got relief were mostly cultivators and persons of low caste.

297. The only reason that I can attribute for not purchasing grain at so dearer a rate is the continual failure of harvest for the last three years, and they saved their lives by selling what little they had with them; so much so, that they had not a single pice for purchasing food for consumption. The ploughing and cultivation fell enormously, because the cultivators themselves had no work, and owing to famine no work was taken in hand by any individual in the village.

298. Owing to the prices of food-grain at famine rates, there was no change whatsoever in the rates of wages earned by artizans, labourers and servants; because, owing to their weak state of health, they could not work as much as was expected from them. People did not at first prefer to join relief-works so long as they could, but when they were reduced to such a state of proverty that they could not help joining works they did.

299. During famine cloth was purchased in a small degree. Cloth of Native Mills was purchased much more than that of English manufacture. The reason is that native cloth is stronger and cheaper. Approximately in villages the percentage of English and Native cloth being 25 to 75, while in city it being 75 to 25, respectively, out of ₹100.

300. From my own experience I can say that persons during current year's famine became weaker than they were in the past famine, the reason being that for the past three years there was little or no crop, persons saved their lives by selling what they had with them; but when they became helpless, anxiety and insufficient food made them weak. Persons could not stand in this famine, because it raged throughout the district for past two years, whereas the past famine was in small tracts for a few months only.

301. Persons accepted gratuitous relief when they became totally helpless. They first supported themselves by selling what little they had with them, then they supported themselves on jungle produce, grass, leaves, etc.; when they failed to procure food in jungles they fasted; and lastly, when they could not fast, they joined the relief-list.

302. As compared with the past famine, persons sold their cattle, ornaments, utensils, etc., in much greater quantity during the recent famine. At first they hesitated to part with their silver ornaments, because silver was selling very cheap, and it fetched only half the price.

303. On no account the prices could have been low.

304. Burma rice was imported to this district by Kamptee merchants. I can assure that no Burma rice was ever imported in Central Provinces, as for India I cannot say.

305. I know nothing except that during recent famine much grain was imported from other countries.

NOTE.—As I have taken part in the management of Poor-House at Seoni from the beginning to the end of the famine, and as I also assisted during the past famine of 1870, I am able to answer questions from my experience, and hope that my answers will be of some use.

Rai Sahib Lala Prayag Das.

Written statement of evidence by Rai Sahib LALA PRAYAG DAS, *Assistant Engineer, Narsinghpur Division.*

1. The chief departures from the principles of the Central Provinces Famine Code, which have come under my observation in the Nerbudda Division during the recent famine, are on the following subjects:—

I have mentioned under each subject the amount of success which has attended the measures adopted and also advice which seems to be useful for the management of future famines.

2. (1)—CLASSIFICATION OF RELIEF-WORKERS.

Section 52 of the Central Provinces Famine Code divides the workers into four classes, *viz.*:—

(*a*) Able-bodied persons accustomed to labour of the kind required on ordinary works.

(*b*) Able-bodied persons accustomed to labour, but not to labour of the kind required on ordinary works.

(*c*) Able-bodied persons not accustomed to work.

(*d*) Persons not able-bodied but fit for light employment on relief-works.

In actual practice it was found that the number of persons of (*a*) and (*c*) classes was very insignificant and had to be left was adopted:— and consequently the following classification

CLASS (*b*)—Persons capable of working.

CLASS (*d*)—Weakly persons fit for light work only.

Non-working	Child Class	I	age between 12 and 16 years.
	,,	II	,, 7 and 12 ,,
	,,	III	under 7 years but not in arms.
	,,	IV	in arms.

The advantages of this abbreviated classification are evident. The admission of newcomers, specially when there was a great rush of people to the works, and the calculations for wages, etc., were very much facilitated and simplified.

A still simpler classification as proposed by Mr. Higham in paragraphs 12, 13, 14 and 15 of his report would be very much better and useful.

3. (2)—RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CONTROL.

The officers of the Public Works Department were held responsible for the proper management of all large works, and were given a wider discretion in all matters connected therewith than contemplated in the Central Provinces Famine Code. All subordinates on a relief-camp were under the direct orders of the Public Works Department Sub-Divisional Officer, who was responsible for the proper management of all branches of the work. The authority of the Deputy Commissioner as head of the district was fully recognized. Weekly returns and daily reports showing the numbers of the various classes of persons employed on the works, the amount of relief afforded, the condition of the people, the wages paid, the outbreak of epidemics, etc., were punctually submitted to him. The opening and closing of works were done according to his wishes. The fixing of tasks and wages, drafting of labourers, and fining for short work were done in consultation with him. An order book was kept on each work in which he could give orders to the officer in charge, if found necessary, during his inspection of the work.

Famine-relief officers and Deputy Commissioner's assistants were not allowed to issue any orders, but for them printed inspection report forms were kept on each work in which they were to record the results of their inspection and which were sent by them direct to the Deputy Commissioner who, after making his own remarks and recommendations, transmitted them to the Executive Engineer, who was responsible for taking immediate steps to remove complaints or adopt suggestions made in the reports. In short, the Deputy Commissioner was kept fully informed of what was being done on each work, and his assistants had the full power and all facilities for inspecting the works and reporting the results of their inspections to the former, while the Public Works Department officers were solely responsible for the proper management of all works.

In this Civil Surgeon had full power of control, and could issue orders on all matters connected with sanitation, field hospitals, water-supply and conservancy. Sites for camps, hospitals and isolated sheds were selected according to his advice. On the appearance of an epidemic the drafting of labourers and breaking up of camps, etc., were done according to his instructions. The hospital assistant, in charge of field hospitals, though nominally placed at the disposal of the Public Works Department for the purposes of paying and auditing their salaries, were practically under the orders of the Civil Surgeon. Thus each department had a full hand in what it was best qualified to do.

This arrangement of controlling the various branches of a relief-work has worked very satisfactorily during the recent famine and ought to be adopted, I venture to state, in the management of future famine works.

4. (3)—DAY OF REST AND SUNDAY WAGE.

Section 68 of the Central Provinces Famine Code provides that relief-workers should not be allowed to work on Sunday, and for Sunday minimum wage should be paid to them on previous Saturday evening. In practice it was found very difficult and somewhat undesirable to give full effect to this ruling. As soon as the inhabitants of villages

in the vicinity of a relief-work came to know that relief-workers were getting a Sunday wage for no work, many of them, in no absolute necessity for relief, would join the relief-work on Friday or Saturday simply to take advantage of the Sunday wage and go back to their homes on Saturday evening. On many relief works when a Sunday wage was allowed I noticed a sudden rise in the number of workers on Fridays and Saturdays and a corresponding fall on Mondays. The undue advantage thus gained by neighbouring villagers is evident. Any one of them joining a relief-work on Friday evening would get minimum wage for that day without doing any work. Next day (*i.e.*, Saturday evening) after working for some 8 hours only he or she would get two days' wages again. Thus any villager by remaining on a relief-work for a day only could go back home with three days' wages in pocket.

Moreover, the working classes in this country do not require a holiday, particularly on Sunday. All that they want is a few hours' leave on any day of the week for the purpose of taking a bath in a river or nalla close to the work or for going to the nearest local bazar for petty purchases. It would thus be much better if some rules were laid down to the effect that officers in charge of relief-works could give a holiday on a local bazar day in the week, with a minimum wage to all relief-workers who have been on the work for a week or more, and allowing to those who have been less than a week on the work the option of taking holiday without any wage or of working as they may choose.

5. (4)—FINING BELOW THE MINIMUM WAGE AND PIECE-WORK A NECESSARY SUBSTITUTE FOR TASK-WORK FOR CERTAIN CLASSES OF WORK.

(*a*) The Central Provinces Code makes no provision for the introduction of the piece-work system under any circumstances. Section 57 lays down that all relief-workers will be paid the full wages of their classes on performing the full tasks prescribed for them. Short work will entail short payment *provided that the wage must never be allowed to fall below the minimum wage*, and any relief-worker contumaciously refusing to perform his task may be sent to the poor-house.

During the recent famine the cost of work done was very excessive on those works which were carried out in strict accordance with the above task-work system, and also a considerable amount of demoralization amongst the relief-workers prevailed on such works. As soon as the people came to know that the State was bound to pay them the minimum wage without any regard to the amount of work they did, they naturally preferred to be satisfied with the minimum wage obtainable by doing little or no work. To obtain the full wage they found they had to work very hard the whole day, and it was, after all, only a pice or two more than the minimum wage. It may be said that such persons should have been sent to the poor-house, but as a matter of fact it was impossible to find accommodation for such large numbers in any of the poor-houses which had just enough accommodation for the pauper and the emaciated. It would, therefore, be better in the management of future famines to allow the minimum wage to weakly persons only who on account of their impaired physique may be incapable of performing a full task, and to lay down some rules for fining below the minimum wage those able-bodied persons who may be capable of doing a full task.

(*b*) On roads where the work consists of earthwork and metal-breaking, the main portion of relief-workers can be employed on the task-work system, but on hill roads where certain items of work cannot be done without the aid of skilled labour and supervision, the piece-work or petty contract-work system would be necessary and advantageous. As an example, suppose a cutting 10 feet deep has to be done in a certain chain. Now no one can say, even approximately, what the materials out of this cutting will be and in what proportion till the whole of it has been done. Generally a mixture of boulders, moorum and rock in varying proportions is found at various depths and neither can tasks be fixed for such a sort of work nor a task-work gang can be expected to complete the whole of this cutting and then take payment for it as task-workers require their wages every second or third day, while a full gang of 90 persons would take more than a month to complete the cutting in question. The work done on each day would be so undefined that it would be impossible to take even approximate measurements of it. It may be said that instead of one gang several gangs may be employed to do this cutting quicker, but it is impossible to do so as the cutting is only 100 feet long and there is not sufficient room for working for more than 100 persons. In such a case it would be necessary to select a ganger or petty contractor who would undertake to do the work at certain famine rates for the various items fixed according to current prices of food grain. The required number of relief-workers would be made over to him, and it would be the duty of the officer in charge to see that they are fully paid their daily wages by the ganger, who would be paid for the work done when it has been fully completed. The ganger would be allowed to employ, for the proper execution of work of this kind, the requisite skilled labour which, in times of famine, requires as much relief as ordinary labourers and agriculturists do. Piece-work system on the above lines has been given trial on some relief-works on hill roads, and the results have been satisfactory in all respects. In the construction of a road in the hills or on the plains there are certain other items of work which cannot be done by famine labour employed on the task-work system, and without which the road would be of no use to any body. These are the necessary bridges, culverts, causeways, inspection bungalows and consolidation of metal. These items, if the public utility of a road is to be considered, should be executed on a piece-work or petty contract work system similar to the one that has been described above for doing a cutting on a hill road. Objections may be raised that the execution of such items of work would afford no employment to relief-workers, but such would not be the case in reality as the whole of the work in these items would have to be done by coolies, masons and carpenters, all of whom, I daresay, require relief during a famine and may, properly speaking, be called relief-workers.

6. In addition to what I have said in the foregoing paragraphs I would beg to advance the following recommendations which, I think, will prove useful in the management of future famines:—

(*a*) The system of "payments by results" in the case of able-bodied persons only should be enforced on all relief-works from the very commencement, so that persons who may be able to get employment elsewhere and may not be in absolute necessity of relief, may not join the works.

(*b*) On every relief-work all weakly and emaciated persons should be employed on the task-work system, and should never be fined below the minimum wage, but after recovering strength may be transferred to piece-work gangs.

(*c*) Payments to all task-workers should be made daily and to piece-workers twice a week by the officer in charge personally, if possible.

(*d*) Gratuitous relief to non-working children should always be given in cooked food at the kitchens and never in money doles. Many parents will put the money dole in their pockets and will not take sufficient care to feed their children properly. I have seen adult workers borrowing children from neighbouring villages and bringing them to the works at the time of payment, simply to obtain the money dole.

(*e*) The responsibilities of an officer in charge of relief work, *vide* section 51 of Central Provinces Famine Code, are too many and on a work having about 5,000 workers he hardly gets time to properly attend to all of them. I would therefore recommend that the hospital assistant (there must be one on every large work) should be held responsible for—

(1) Hospital inspections.

(2) The care of children and infirm persons unfit for work.

(3) Water-supply and conservancy.

(*f*) The fixing of tasks should be left to the discretion of local officers, as different kinds of soil and stones are met on the various roads and sometimes on the same road in a district.

(*g*) All major relief-works in the Nerbudda Division were satisfactorily carried out during the recent famine according to the rules and orders contained in G. O. No. C-498, dated 26th December 1896, which may, after any modifications or additions which may now be found necessary, be added as an appendix to the Central Provinces Famine Code.

Mr. E. A. DeBrett.

Written statement of evidence by MR. E. A. DEBRETT, *Deputy Commissioner, Mandla, dated 19th February 1898.*

I have been asked to give evidence as regards two districts —(1) Narsinghpur and (2) Mandla. I have not had time to get the files from Narsinghpur, and therefore only write from memory. As regards the Mandla District, I cannot give any information of my own knowledge, for I only joined it at the end of December last, after the famine was over. My notes will therefore, I fear, be very meagre.

(*A*)—*Departures from the Principles of the Central Provinces Famine Code.*

Village Relief, Section 34.—We could not trust to the able-bodied members of a family to support their feeble relations, and gratuitous relief had to be given to keep the latter alive. Emaciation and physical infirmity were the qualifications for gratuitous relief, and the proviso in section 34 had to be disregarded.

Relief-Works.—The elaborate classification of labourers contemplated in the Code could not be worked up to, and had to be abandoned. We only recognized *B* and *D* class workers (men, women and children) and dependants (men, women and children).

Relief Centres were started when village-relief was not fully organized. These are not recognized in the Code. In Narsinghpur the police looked after them, and there they were practically depôts at which people were collected, fed and forwarded as soon as possible to a relief work, a poor-house or their own homes, accordingly as they were fit for work, strangers unfit for work, or residents of the district fit for village-relief. In Mandla they seem to have resembled poor-houses with a small relief work attached. I believe that everyone is agreed in thinking that in future relief centres of this type should be avoided, as they are difficult to manage satisfactorily if there are a considerable number of them.

(*B*)—*Degree of success attained in Famine Relief.*

Mortality has been unusually high. In Narsinghpur it was, I think, 80 per mille; and in Mandla it was 98 per mille during the year 1897. High prices led to a reduction of rations among all (except the very well-to-do classes), and this lowered their vitality. In October, fever also was very prevalent, and the enquiries which I made in Narsinghpur led me to the conclusion that it was exceptionally severe. The well-to-do did not escape, and the deceased were as often as not members of families who had not felt the necessity of taking gratuitous relief or resorting to relief works. Mortality in this month, in the Narsinghpur District, rose, I think, to nearly 10 per mille. In Mandla it was highest in July and August, when it rose to 16 per mille. In 1879, in the worst month, in the worst district of the North-West Provinces, the death-rate rose to 37 per mille, though there was no scarcity whatever.

Report of the Indian Famine Commission of 1880, Part I, page 29.

I think there can be no doubt that the measures of relief adopted saved many lives. In Narsinghpur the famine-stricken immigrants from Bhopal were very difficult to manage, and undoubtedly deaths among these raised the rate; but it is impossible to say to what extent this was the case; for no separate statistics were kept. Even had they been separately registered, very little reliance could have been placed on the figures, for no Bhopali would ever admit that he came from across the border, fearing lest the admission should entail his being sent back to Bhopal.

In Mandla the timidity of the aboriginal tribes and the land-locked nature of the district rendered the administration of famine relief a peculiarly difficult matter. The people would not apparently go very far from their homes to a work, preferring to attempt to make a living out of jungle produce. Special measures had to be taken for the extension of village-relief, which was given in this district with great liberality, as many as 7 per cent. of the population being aided in this way. In Narsinghpur village relief was given to nearly 4 per cent. of the population, and undoubtedly in both districts this form of relief did much to save life. Children's kitchens were almost equally important from this point of view. It was found that even if the parents were given cash for the maintenance of their children, the latter did not fill out. It was resolved, therefore, to provide a network of kitchens all over the district, and insist on children living within a two mile radius attending a kitchen or going without relief. After a short period of regular feeding, they fattened wonderfully.

As regards economy, I fear that many people went on to relief works, who did not really need relief, when the task-work system was in force. They could not be paid below a certain minimum wage, and if they had some private resources, they were satisfied with getting that wage. In so far as this enabled them to keep seed grain, etc., with which to carry on their cultivation and support themselves in their own homes until harvest time, this was not an unmixed evil, but it undoubtedly added a large sum to the cost of famine relief.

Village relief and village kitchens were, I think, the most economical forms of relief. I do not think there was much chance of leakage in either. The work of the Land Record staff was constantly checked and the kitchens were generally well managed, the persons in charge being generally respectable heads of villages.

An attempt was made in Mandla on a small scale to import grain at the expense of Government for sale. Some 12,000 maunds were brought into the district accordingly, but much of it remained unsold at the close of the famine and had to be sold for what it would fetch. The accounts are, I regret to say, still incomplete; but from what I have seen of them, I fear the cost of this experiment will be not less than R40,000. It is easy to be wise after the event, but I cannot help thinking that private enterprise, whether stimulated by the promise of a small bonus or not, would have risen to the occasion and carried out this piece of business far cheaper than Government could possibly do.

(*C*)—*Advice as to measures and methods of working likely to prove most effective.*

Relief Works.—To secure efficient supervision, the charge must be of moderate dimensions. Five thousand is too large. I would not allow more than 3,000.

The officer-in-charge should be of a better class than we have been able to get on the rate prescribed (about R60 per mensem). I would give R100 or even R150 per mensem, and, if possible, get Europeans as officers-in-charge. This is a vital point if my next proposal is to be worked properly. The labourers should be divided according as they are—(*a*) strong and fit for piece-work, or (*b*) infirm. The rates for piece-work should be so fixed as to enable the unskilled labourer to secure a wage sufficient to keep him in condition, if he works hard. At the same time he should not be able to earn more than that wage, otherwise professional labourers may swarm in and make considerable sums. The infirms will be put on task-work until they have picked up sufficiently to be put on piece-work. The proper classification of the labourers will be of course a very important matter, and the officer-in-charge must be absolutely trustworthy if this work is to be properly done. This is why I urge the importance of appointing Europeans as officers-in-charge. Dependants should get cooked food at the kitchen on the works, and not a money dole. The only exception to this rule would be that of a child at the breast. Here the mother would get the cash allowance for the child. But, as far as possible, I would avoid big works and keep the people in their villages.

Executive Engineer's charges are too large for one man to manage, if once relief works are started in considerable numbers. Each district should have a European officer to inspect and supervise relief works, under the orders of the Executive Engineer, who will look after accounts and professional matters. The District Supervising Officer will correspond direct with the Deputy Commissioner about other matters.

(*D*)—*Test-works are not a satisfactory method of ascertaining whether famine exists or not.*

If strictly managed, the numbers who resort to them do not give any true idea of the intensity of the prevailing distress, while if slackly managed, a crowd of loafers swarm on to them.

Poor-houses and kitchens show more truly the existence of distress. If the people accept cooked food, there can be no doubt that there is a famine.

If these institutions fill, the staff of Revenue Inspectors and patwaris should be strengthened at once, and village-relief should be started vigorously. Tahsil charges should be sub-divided where necessary in order to secure efficient supervision.

When dealing with aboriginal tribes, who are timid about going to relief-works, it might be well to make patwaris prepare, besides the list of persons fit for village-relief, a further list of persons who, though able-bodied, require aid. The mukaddam would be given charge of these men and

directed to make them work at improving village sites and roads, embanking fields, enlarging and improving village tanks, eradicating *kans* grass or any other useful work that might be available. He would be given an advance for the purpose and would be responsible for the work. These people would, I think, work under their own headmen willingly, and they are honest enough to carry out their side of the bargain. They would be kept in their villages and prevented from wandering and losing condition. A list of possible village improvements would have to be prepared in anticipation of the occurrence of famine. These are the main changes that I would suggest. The Famine Code, which, every one agrees, will have to be revised, could be made to contain them.

Mr. E A. De Brett.

Written answers to the Commission's questions by Rao Bahadur RAJARAM SITARAM DIXIT, *Honorary Magistrate, Nagpur.*

Rai Bahadur Rajaram Sitaram Dixit.

*1. In the Nagpur District where I derived most of my experience of the famine, the population affected was about two-thirds of the total population.

2. To both, *i.e.*, to local failure of the timely rains and consequently of the harvest and to abnormally high prices.

3 (*a*). In the absence of definite information on the subject which is not in my possession, I am not prepared to mention the extent of the failure of the harvest as compared with the normal state of things.

(*b*). Yes; in most cases they were twice as high as in previous years. I had no experience of past famines.

4. The condition of the Nagpur District before the failure of 1896 rains was not unsatisfactory and would have been quite normal up to that date, but for the effect thereon of the failure of crops in some of the other districts in the Province during the two preceding seasons.

5. Under normal circumstances the higher and the middle classes of the population may be considered to enjoy a fair measure of material well-being according to the standard of living in this country. But the lower classes, notably the labouring classes and some of the artizan classes are even ordinarily in an unsatisfactory condition, and appear to be scantily fed. A few of them make up the want of sufficient food by roots, mahua flowers, etc., etc. The number of people in the district whose condition is not even ordinarily satisfactory is, I think, fully one-third of the total population of the district.

6. Yes; the agriculture of this district and the Province in general depends solely on timely rains, as no irrigation facility exists and the tanks for paddy fields, wherever they do exist, are solely dependent on timely rains.

7. The majority of the population of the affected area has now neither reserves of money nor of food for supporting themselves in case of failure of one or more harvests. The only section of the whole population that seem to have any reserve of food or money are the malguzars, merchants and persons in higher grades of service. The proportion of these classes to the whole population is, I think, about one-tenth.

8. So far as I am aware, there has been no famine in this district during recent years.

9. I have not sufficient materials to answer this question. In the Nagpur District the distress was realized early enough and the relief operations were commenced in time. In some other districts of the Central Provinces, however, they were commenced much later than they should have been. Whether this was due to any under-estimate of the degree of distress in those districts in the earlier period or to any other cause I am not in a position to say.

10. So far as my experience which, however, was derived mainly from the Nagpur District during the recent famine, as mentioned at the outset, goes, it coincides with the opinion of the Famine Commission of 1879 mentioned in the question.

12. I think that the proportion of the total population relieved in the Nagpur District was not larger than was necessary to prevent loss of life or severe suffering, and that the persons relieved were such as were really in need of relief.

13. I think there were cases in which a larger proportion of the population might have been relieved consistently with the objects mentioned. The reason in my opinion was that the relief arrangements were not suited to the habits of most of the sufferers and therefore ill-adapted to them. I shall explain this more fully later on.

14. I think it was.

19. Yes, so far as my experience of the works under my charge goes.

20. Yes, so far as my experience of the works under my charge goes.

22. Yes, so far as my experience of the works under my charge goes.

27. Gratuitous relief was given through the medium of poor-houses in which residence is a condition of relief and partly by means of doles of money to the dependents on the workers employed on relief-works.

32. I think the class that has suffered the least injury by the famine, alleviated as it was by relief measures, is the labouring class. The other classes have suffered injury of a more or less permanent character, though it must be said that the injury to the land-owning and cultivating classes was reduced to a certain extent by the relief measures.

33. I think the Code, if properly worked, practically meets all requirements.

39. Measures of State relief used during the late famine in my charge or within my personal knowledge were the following:—

(i) Works of metal collections.

(ii) Poor-house.

(iii) Kitchen.

Besides these I have heard of relief being granted by the State in the following ways:—

(i) Relief in cash to the low paid servants of the State whose pay was below ₹16 per mensem.

(ii) Takavi loans on more liberal scale and terms than usual.

(iii) Remissions and postponement of land revenue.

(iv) Opening up of reserved forests.

As regards measures of private relief, the whole nation has been doling out charity privately as usual and more without any special organizations. But at several places of importance attempts were made to introduce organized methods of private charity: as an instance some of the leading citizens of Sitabaldi opened a kitchen near the Sangam during the early part of the distress, where food was distributed to about 2,000 persons per day. This was continued until a more general movement was made with the object of opening and maintaining a poor-house in Nagpur. This poor-house was opened and maintained purely out of private subscriptions for about two months, after which time the Government took over its charge.

At some of the places in the interior philanthropic malguzars opened kitchens for their village people. Relief to respectable poor men, women and weavers was extended from the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund to the extent the funds admitted. Many rich and large landholders such as Raja Bahadur Raghoji Rao Bhonsla and others opened the work of sinking large tanks and wells for relieving the distressed population of their villages and the villages in the vicinity. Gratuitous relief to the persons mentioned in Chapter V of the Famine Code was given from the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund, and also Missionary bodies established institutions for taking care of orphans at several places. Another important measure of private relief was the opening of a shop for selling to the distressed grain at cheaper rates than those prevailing in the market, for which purpose ₹10,000 were lent by private individuals without interest. It would, however, be fair to add that the loss sustained by the shop was recouped out of the Indian Charitable Famine Relief Fund.

40. As—

(*a*) a member of the Provincial Committee of the Indian Charitable Famine Relief Fund,

(*b*) a member of the Nagpur District Charitable Committee,

(*c*) a member of the Bagarganj Poor-house Committee, Nagpur,

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* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

Rao Bahadur Rajaram Sitaram Dixit.

(*d*) a member of the Sangam Kitchen Committee, Sitabaldi, Nagpur,

(*e*) as the Officer-in-charge of three Government Relief Camps.

(*f*) as share-holder of the grain supplying shop to the distressed,

I had opportunities of gaining experience of the working of the first three measures stated in reply to question No. 39.

41. Of the State measures the only one that seems unauthorized by the Code is the throwing open of the forest produce, such as mahua, etc., etc.

42. All the Code measures were introduced sooner or later during the late famine. None of the works with which I was concerned or of which I had personal knowledge had to be abandoned after trial.

43. In answering this question I shall confine myself only to one measure of relief, *viz.*, relief-works, as I am conversant with the details of that measure. As to kitchens, however, I may make one general remark, *viz.*, that the salutary provision made in Section 59 of the Code, about the villages being grouped into circles not more than five miles in diameter was not observed in many cases. This departure from the Code necessarily led to the measure not being sufficiently useful. The departures from the Code in the matter of relief-works were the following:—

(*a*) The classification of labourers provided for by Section 52 of the Code was not observed in several cases. Originally there were four classes made, but later on the classes were reduced to two, classes A and C being done away with. This was not warranted by the Code. Again in some places during the last and the closing part of the famine operations, the detailed division of labour was practically overlooked and almost all workmen were paid at the D class rates. I am not prepared to say whether this was done with a view to test the necessity of continuing the works.

(*b*) Sunday allowances as provided by Section 68 of the Code were not paid during a part of the season, while at some places, I am informed, they were not paid at all.

(*c*) Some portion of the work was done on the petty contract system, which I think is in direct contravention of the provisions of Section 49 of the Code. The system was called the piece-work system, but I think that description would not be correct. In the piece-work system the workers work and are paid without the intervention of any middleman for the quantity of work each man does. But the so-called piece-work system, as was introduced during the late famine, excluded the coming in of weak persons, as they were unable to do as much quantity as the able-bodied persons could do, and the introduction of a middleman defeated the object of the section quoted above. At the same time I am not sure whether real piece-work even as described by me is allowed under the Code.

45. In place of road-making projects and stone-breaking it would be more advantageous to the people to be relieved and to the population of the district itself to introduce relief-works of the nature of tanks and wells and other works of village improvements, inasmuch as the roads cannot be maintained without heavy cost, while the works of the nature described would confer a permanent boon on the population and without any appreciable amount of expenditure to maintain them. Moreover, this suggestion carries with it the advantage of taking relief to the home of the distressed, and would save the Government the necessity of vexatious and costly arrangements for hutting, watering, medicine and also to a great extent tools. Another advantage to the people themselves will be that they would not have to leave their homes and would thus be in a position to look after their household cattle and their fields, all which they had to abandon to seek for relief under the present system. In other respects also these works would prove to be more remunerative and less troublesome both to the Government and to the people, as the provision of tanks and wells will probably improve the condition of land in the Province.

Another measure which I would suggest, which is in fact contemplated by the Code itself (*vide* Section 104), is the relief of artizans by employing them, as far as possible, in their own trades. This section does not seem to have been put in operation in this district at all, except latterly when weavers were employed as contemplated by Section 105 of the Code. This experiment proved successful. It gave a sufficient living to a large number of weavers who otherwise might have been in a very precarious condition, as they were extremely reluctant to go to stone-breaking work and were not very useful there, as I can say from my experience of a very few who did come to the relief-works under my charge before the weavers relief-work was opened. It was also, speaking economically, more advantageous to the Government and the people than the relief-works for metal-breaking. It is a known fact that the cloth turned out by the weavers as a famine relief-work fetches about 75 per cent. of the cost price. The same would, I think, have been the case with the works for other artizans if they had been opened as contemplated by Section 104.

48 (A). Stone-breaking was not approved of by those who were unused to this class of work, and such persons formed the majority of the workers. These took to stone-breaking necessarily under pinch and force of circumstances. For instance, a few weavers, as said above, were observed to go on stone-breaking works, but that was neither to their taste nor with willingness.

(B).—As regards the intelligent classes, not themselves in need of relief, they appeared to have with one voice approved of the several measures of relief undertaken by the State and the charitable public, as would be evident from the resolution of the Congress on the subject and the Press of the country, though it must be said there were complaints here and there with regard to the detailed working of the measures.

53. The roads constructed as relief-works will be of permanent service to the community, provided they are effectively maintained in future, which I think they should be, as if they are not maintained in good order, they will surely be abandoned and the outlay made in making these roads will be so much waste of State funds.

55. As will be gathered from my replies to the previous questions, metal collection is useful only to a limited extent. I would give the preference to works which, though small and scattered, are of more immediate use to the people of the district.

59. As regards the latter portion of the question, *viz.*, securing strict supervision over a small tank work and preventing the non-distressed population of the village and surrounding villages from applying for work on such tanks, I think both are possible, provided the village mukaddam, malguzars and other intelligent residents, as the case may be, and also the mukaddams and malguzars of the surrounding villages, be formed into a punchayet or Committee for supervising the work in their circles, and be made to furnish a tentative list beforehand of probable number of labourers fit to be relieved that could come on the work proposed or to be proposed. This arrangement will, I am strongly of opinion, work economically and profitably, and will be much appreciated by the people.

60. There is a large field open for village tanks and wells and other necessary sanitary improvements on which we can safely rely in the event of some future famine. The present number of tanks recently constructed have been inadequately few in view of the large extent of country to be provided with wells and tanks of fresh water.

62. Impounding reservoirs, if constructed, would certainly be regarded by the population of the district as one of the sure means of protecting both people and cattle against famine to a certain extent. In addition to this safeguard against famine, they will be a source of permanent benefit to the agricultural population round about. Moreover, during times of drought, the water of those reservoirs would save specially the cattle from distress on account of insufficiency of water.

71. The distressed inhabitants of a village may be induced to attend relief-works and return to their homes every night when the works are not more than four miles from their homes. The reasons for this opinion have already been expressed in reply to question No. 45. As regards relief-works where accommodation for labourers is provided, they may well be at the distance of about twenty-five miles, but such relief-works would be resorted to only by persons who have no close ties to keep them to their own places, and therefore would not be relieving the really distressed but tied down people. Hence such relief-works should, as far as possible, be not more than four miles from the homes of the distressed people.

72. Able-bodied labourers suffering from distress would not refuse to attend relief-works at a distance not exceeding

four miles, and it would be practicable to withhold State relief from able-bodied labourers who refuse to go to the works within that distance. If the works are, however, at a greater distance, home ties, *viz.*, the love of the household cattle and farms, would prevent many from going to them, and it would not be advisable to withhold relief from such persons.

73. In reply to this I can recommend pure labourers, *i.e.*, "thalwas," to be taken to distant places as defined in this question where they could be used most usefully and profitably, but I would not recommend the agricultural class out and out to be taken to any appreciable distance from their homes, as they are sure to lose, and that permanently, more than what they would acquire at these works. My recommendation in reply to Question 45 above, regarding the opening of the village sanitary works, such as constructing tanks and sinking wells, etc., if accepted, would provide ample room for works useful to the village community.

74. As far as I know, accommodation was provided on the works for those who desired to live there, but it was not compulsory to live there: so far as the works under my charge were concerned, not more than 10 per cent. lived on the works.

76 (A). No; I am not in favour of either the one or the other.

(B). I do not think that when residence is not enforced the relief-works attract many persons not actually requiring relief. Almost all the persons employed on work under my charge, where residence was not a condition, had the appearance of distressed people.

(C). Yes; I think them quite sufficient tests.

77. Yes; under particular circumstances. As an instance, a family consisting of young children and females finds it harder, inconvenient and prejudicial to their health to remain on work, specially during the rainy season as a whole and during extreme winter. If residence is to be made a peremptory condition for relief, a full and copious supply of fuel and clothing is necessary. For want of these above two items, many of the labourers who would otherwise have no objection to live on the works, find it distasteful to do so.

78. Certainly not, and to make it possible and practicable assistance of intelligent gentlemen of the district and village headman would be necessary, and this arrangement can be made without any material and appreciable cost.

79. None as far as I am aware of. As reduction in task in consideration of long distance was not made, the latter part of the question needs no reply.

82. As far as I know, the residence being not enforced, such provision was not made for those who came to reside on the works.

83. Yes; as the dependents of such relief labourers as can return home daily owing to the works being close to their houses, are not forced to come to relief-works for relief, as they generally supplement the earnings of the workers by doing light and congenial sort of work. The reverse is the case when the labourers are required to live on works distant from their homes.

85. Not in all cases, I mean thereby that it is not suitable for weak people and those who are unaccustomed to the class of the work required of them.

86. It is suitable in cases of strong persons or those who are used to that sort of work. This can be introduced generally when works for which a large number of workers accustomed to any particular sort of work can be found.

88. Such persons as are too weak or incompetent to turn out as much work as would give them subsistence wages at the offered rates should be employed departmentally and paid the minimum wages irrespective of the task. In cases of workers so engaged such of them as wilfully or through obstinacy neglect to do the work expected out of them should be sent to the poor-house.

89. Yes; I would propose the maximum to be 10 per cent. more than the A class wages to experts.

90. Not more than 20. In earthwork not more than four diggers, provided the lead is not more than 150 to 200 feet, should form a gang.

91. Yes; provided the workers are given the option of forming the gang themselves and selecting their own headman.

(B). As the system was not adopted on the works under my charge I cannot answer this question.

92. As by substitution of piece-work for task work much of the work, such as mustering, payment to each individual separately, etc., etc., would be saved, there will be considerable reduction in the numbers and cost of establishment.

93. If the piece-work system, and no task work system be introduced, the weak ones among the distressed will not be able to earn sufficient to sustain them, and will therefore not be induced to attend the works. Under these circumstances I would recommend the piece-work and task work system to be introduced simultaneously, the former for able-bodied and the latter for weak, respectively.

94. The classification as at present provided for in the Famine Code is, in my opinion, both convenient and fair, and will work satisfactorily.

95. The quantities in chattaks allowed by the Famine Code for the ration of different classes of male workers are fair and sufficient, provided they are supplemented by fuel. This ration should be the same in quantity for males as well as for females for reasons to be explained in answer to Question No. 96 (A).

96. Yes; I think that rations meaning the component parts of them as mentioned in the Code with the addition of fuel, should be given in kind and not in cash at their calculated standard, for the following reasons:—

(*a*) It will avoid the caprices of the dealers and thereby fluctuations in the prices of the necessaries and their adulterations.

(*b*) It will prevent the possibility of laying by cash by workers to the prejudice of their health. This was, I am informed, found to be the case in some places.

(*c*) This arrangement will not only be a satisfactory and profitable mode of relieving people, but would also be advantageous to the State in so far as it would allow less chances of misappropriating funds when in cash than in the shape of grain. If, however, the State finds this alternative system inconvenient to work by reason of having to supply necessaries at all places and to maintain larger establishments for working out this system, payment in cash may be made, but at rates which would be sufficient to purchase the necessaries. But in that case the rates of wages should be commensurate with the actual prices of obtaining on the spot, and also the supervising officers should arrange for shops for full and proper supply of all the requirements.

96 (A). I would recommend lighter tasks for women, but the wages of both must be the same within the same class, I propose lighter tasks because women have to look to cooking and tending of their children, and thus cannot give full time to do their task. The wages should be the same because I am of opinion that both males and female consume equal quantity of food.

97. Classification of task and wages for children above 12 years of age should be made with due regard to their health, *i.e.*, the classes should be four as in the case of adults, and their wages should three-quarters of those of the adult classes. For children below 12 years of age no classification as to task need be made. As regards wages, there should be three classes instead of two, as at present, *i.e.*:—

(i) Children up to 3 years of age,

(ii) from 4 to 8 years of age,

(iii) from 9 to 12 years of age, and their allowances should respectively be $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the maximum wages of the adults.

98. Eight, but without a fixed task up to the age of 12.

99. Workers failing to do the task set them for a week's time continuously should be paid three-quarters of D class wages, and if even after that time no improvement is observed, they should be sent to the poor-houses on penal rations.

100. Yes; in case of obstinate persons as already said in reply to the last question.

102. Please refer to my reply to Question No. 89.

103. Yes; Sunday wages should be allowed only to those who have regularly worked for not less than three days in the week, but in exceptional cases discretion should be allowed to the Officer-in-charge in making such payments.

108. In my reply to Question No. 93 I have proposed task work only for weak-bodied workers to be paid D class wages, and hence it is immaterial to fix any particular unit to compose a gang; so far as convenience of pay is concerned, about 10 or 12 persons could be made a unit, but I

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said in the reply above referred to, no fine should be imposed on workers except in the case of persons of proved obstinacy.

112. In the camps under my charge the proportion of males to females stands in the ratio of 1 : 2.

113. At Nagpur adult males did find private employment in excess of the famine wages, but the wages so obtained were not sufficient to support their wives and children, and hence it was necessary for the State to employ them.

118. I am of opinion that officers whose pay is not below Rs. 100, and who have been in permanent service for not less than 10 years, should be selected as Officers-in-charge of Relief Camps, as such officers are generally above temptation and in dread of losing credit.

119. Yes.

120. Yes; otherwise many matters of detail will be unnecessarily delayed.

121. Third class Magistrate's powers should be given only to Inspecting and Controlling Officers and not to Officers-in-charge.

124. The labourers on task work should, I think, be paid daily, and those on piece-work twice a week.

125. I would recommend the adoption of the pice unit for payment and not below it.

129. Maximum should be 3,000.

130. Yes; I think kitchens would be preferable to cash doles in view of preventing parents from appropriating them to themselves, but to guard against the religious prejudices of the people, care should be taken in selecting proper cooks.

131. I have appended hereto a statement showing the general result of the operations under my charge, and the ratio asked for in this question is given at the foot of that statement. This ratio cannot, however, be held to be true in the case of works in the interior where there are less facilities.

135. No; they were not in excess of the normal wages, but in several instances they were lower than the normal wages.

136. No.

137. I do not think that relief-works attracted any labour that would otherwise have gone to private employers. The reason may possibly be that there were not any large works carried on by private employers in the vicinity, but I myself think that the reason was that the wage earned on relief-works was less than that paid by private employers of labour.

138. Yes. They were in Nagpur assisted by the works opened by the Empress Mill authorities, which appeared to answer the description given in the question.

140. I had to employ labour on the works which I was carrying on in the way of my business which is that of a contractor. The supply of labour to the works under my control was not injuriously affected by the opening of relief-works,

141. No.

142. No: though the relief-works were within five miles from the site of my private works as a contractor, there was no interference.

143. There was no occasion.

144. Yes: as private works were not so extensive as to absorb all available labour, and as the great majority of the distressed were not used to this sort of work required by private employers.

146. No,

147. One suggestion that I should like to make about metal-breaking is that instead of keeping the metal for road-making it will be more advantageous to open such works near the railway line and arrange with the Railway authorities that they should take it over according to their requirements.

151. According to the Code gratuitous relief was to be afforded to physically disabled persons, such as the blind, etc., etc., who in ordinary years are fed on public charity. But in famine years they are shouldered out by distressed people in large numbers, and hence it becomes necessary for the State to maintain them.

153. All incapable men needing relief should be given gratuitous relief, whether their supporters go to relief-works or not,

161. I think not,

164. I think that the opening of kitchens for all comers in the place of gratuitous home relief is a better way of attaining the object of relieving the really needy, provided of course due care is taken not to offend religious prejudices,

165 (A). Socially it is considered a derogatory step to avail oneself of cooked food in kitchens.

(B). In some instances it would.

166. Yes; provided assistance from village men is availed of.

167. As far as I know it was given in the form of money, but I should prefer in grain for the same reasons as noted in reply to Question No. 96.

168. As far as I know, it was decided to be given at their homes.

171. As far as I know, it was not administered through non-official agency.

173. From lower classes of Hindus and Muhammadans usually given to begging.

174 (A). Yes.

(B). Yes; provided due care was taken to respect their religious prejudices.

175 (A). Yes.

(B). To the increasing poverty of the people in general and the consequent inability to sustain themselves.

179 (A). Yes.

180 (A). It is sufficient.

(B). Yes.

181. As far as the Famine Code deals with the poor-houses and their management, I consider the rules in that connection sufficiently explicit and fair. But they omit one important particular, *i.e.*, that they take no account of clothing the inmates. It is essential to clothe them properly, specially during the cold and rainy season.

183. Some efforts were made to get light work out of poor-house inmates, but the degree of success I am not aware of.

193. In my opinion the functions of relief kitchens should be to distribute cooked food only to all children under 12 years of age, to persons who are by nature permanently disabled, such as the maimed, blind, lepers, etc., and to all persons who are really weak and incapable of work, but as soon as the last class of people have recovered in health, they should be drafted to work, and should not be allowed to be a burden to the kitchen.

194. The opening of kitchens in larger numbers would be a boon to the incapable, poor and children whether they be opened in connection with relief-works or otherwise.

198 (A). Cooked food provided that their caste prejudices are respected.

(B). Not in all cases.

201 (A).—Yes.

(B). Yes.

204. I do approve of the principle of giving subsistence advances to cultivators for a limited time only when they cannot attend relief-works leaving their fields uncared for.

205. It is both economical to the Government and profitable to the cultivators if advances are made to cultivators on certain conditions instead of offering them work and wages.

206. I think not, if proper conditions are imposed when giving the loans.

220. Orphans who have been maintained by the State during the famine should be disposed of by Government in one of the following ways:—

(i) Wherever private orphanages or associations in that behalf exist, such number of orphans as those orphanages and associations would take up should be made over to them.

(ii) A public request should be made calling upon all charitably disposed respectable people to take up as many orphans as they would like on certain conditions to be fixed by Government.

(iii) Government should open up some institutions of the nature of a Reformatory School where the residue of these orphans might be usefully trained up until they arrive at the age of 16, after which the orphans would have to shift for themselves for their own living.

221. The reply to Question No. 220 includes the reply to this question.

242. As far as I know, arrangements were made through the Police of the district to provide starving wanderers with cash doles for a day, provided the wanderers were *bonâ fide* seekers of relief-works,

243 (A). It is possible to decrease the number of wanderers by opening up more works or more village relief centres.

(B). No, for the wages secured on relief-works are simply sufficient for subsistence for the time they are at work and leave no margin for saving for other seasons. The migratory classes go out in certain seasons of the year with the express view of earning so much as would allow them to lay by provisions for other seasons.

273. In the Nagpur town well-to-do labourers and artizans use wheat, dâl and rice as their food-grains.

274. At the time of the first meal, bread and vegetables are generally eaten, while at the second, rice and dâl, bread and vegetables are used.

275. If wheat is not obtainable, juari or bajri is used. If rice is not obtainable, then coarse flour of either wheat or juari is used in its stead.

276. Out of the two, *i.e.*, juari and bajri, the latter is considered least palatable.

277. The general objection to other grains which are not used are :—

(i) they are not used to their taste.

(ii) they are considered hard to digest.

283. During the last 20 years there has been a constant and continuous rise in the average price of food-grain. The rise has been greater in cases of grains that find a foreign market.

293. The habit of the people to store grain has diminished appreciably. The opening up of railways and the high prices at which grain is sold have induced the agriculturists who used to store up grain to part with their grain instead of storing it. Another reason for this diminution is to be found in the fact that the agriculturists require more ready money than before. Living has become much more costly and the standard of living has also risen to a certain extent. Last but not least, the amount of rates and taxes payable by them has also increased.

294 (A). Yes.

(B). Yes.

297 (A). Because there was not sufficient reserve with the distressed to enable them to meet the high prices.

Rao Bahádur Rajaram Sitaram Dixit.

(B). Yes; very little of private work was available because the famine produced a general dulness all round.

298. No; because there being no demand for labour, the wages could not increase.

305. As regards the latter portion of this question, I would recommend the importation of grain by Government for poor-houses and relief-works from foreign countries. This will check the exorbitant rise of prices which the traders in grain were found to charge in view of having no competition in supply of grain.

In normal years no importation of grain on the part of Government is required because the people of the country have some stock of food-grain with themselves and are not at the mercy of these grain-dealers as they are during times of scarcity and famine. Such a step on the part of Government which will involve no loss in as far as it would be supplying grain in place of money, would be a great relief to the poor and would serve as a checkmate on the abnormal rise of prices.

Another suggestion that I should have made in answer to question 147, is the construction of an irrigation canal or channel for Nagpur and for such large towns in the Provinces, wherever possible, as have abundant supply of manure which would result in an increase in the revenue from fields on both sides of it sufficient to maintain it efficiently and even more. As a tangible instance I would suggest for Nagpur an irrigation channel say for ten miles. This channel will I think water about 1,000 acres of land and will pay at the rate of Re. 0-8-0 per acre per month, or Rs. 500 in round numbers. This would certainly cover the cost of efficient maintenance. This irrigation project would utilize the abundant quantity of manure of the Nagpur Municipality, which unfortunately is now wasted, and will bring in a good revenue to them. This supply of water with this now useless quantity of manure will make gardens of fields, and sugarcane plantations especially will thrive, as it has already done in places like Poona and Sholapur. I must, however, add that my knowledge of engineering is limited, having been derived in the practice of my profession of a contractor.

Statement referred to in answer to Question No. 131.

Name of Relief Camps.	Quantity.	Amount paid for taskwork per 100 c. ft.	Cost for hutting per 100 c. ft.	Cost for tools per 100 c. ft.	Cost of establishment per 100 c. ft.	Paid for gratuitous relief, including Sunday allowance per 100 c. ft.	Paid for quarrying per 100 c. ft.	Total cost per 100 c. ft. of metal.	Ordinary cost-rate 100 c. ft.
		₹ a. p.	₹ a. p.	₹ a. p.	₹ a. p.	₹ a. p.	₹ a. p.	₹ a. p.	₹ a. p.
Boregaon Basalt metal collection	681,000	3 12 7	0 2 6	0 1 6	0 2 11	0 7 6	1 6 0	6 1 0	3 8 0
Madhova Basalt metal collection	2:3,800	3 15 8	0 2 2	0 0 8	0 3 11	0 9 9	1 4 0	6 4 3	3 8 0
Digora Sandstone metal collection	222,200	1 5 6	0 3 8	0 1 0	0 1 0	0 0 6	1 0 0	2 11 8	2 12 0

The above statement will show, as far as the sandstone-metal collection is concerned, the cost of work in my charge including gratuitous relief (which however was not given during the early period). Sunday allowances and all other charges mentioned above is the same as the ordinary cost, whereas the cost of the work of basalt-metal collection as a relief-work was about 1½ times the cost of ordinary works of the kind.

Written statement of evidence by Mr. J. B. Fuller, C.I.E., *Commissioner, Jabalpur Division, dated 27th February 1898.*

I regret that the pressure of other work renders it impossible for me to deal adequately on paper with even the more important of the issues raised by the questions which have been circulated by the Famine Commission. All that I can attempt is to indicate, very briefly, the conclusions to which my experience has led me on some of the most prominent of these questions, and the reasons for my conclusions, leaving it to the Commission to examine me orally on any points on which they wish for an expansion of these notes.

Mr. J. B. Fuller.

2. *The facilities to be offered for relief.*—The Famine Code assumes that the Government is quit of its obligations if it affords the people opportunities for obtaining relief on relief works within a reasonable (but undefined) distance of their houses. It provides for the grant of relief to non-workers in poor-houses, at kitchens and at their houses, and also as dependants on relief works. But relief in these forms plays a subordinate part. Relief works are to be the backbone of famine relief organization.

Experience has given reason for doubting the justice of this assumption, in the case of some parts at all events of this divis[illegible] the success of State interference is to be judged by its effectiveness in providing food for the starving.

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3. There are certain classes of the population who have shown the greatest repugnance to resort to relief works, and have held aloof from them even in direst extremity. These in the main belong to aboriginal tribes, the Gonds and Kols. The Gond villages in Mandla suffered very severely indeed. Yet I only came across one which sent large numbers to a work, and this was situated within half a mile of the camp. Hindu villages, situated in the same locality, on the other hand, sent much more freely and suffered very little indeed. The Gonds will work in their own villages, or in their own way, but will generally not submit to the novelty and the discipline of a relief work. If they are to be relieved they must be relieved in their villages and be provided with work on the spot under the control of the headman. I believe that it would be easier to arrange for this than would at first sight appear.

4. Generally it has been found that the distance from which people will come to relief works is less than is commonly supposed, and that to be effective relief works must be very numerous. The Executive Engineers are agreed that even during the open months very few of the workers came from a greater distance than seven miles, and during the rains very few came from half this distance. The idea of transporting relief workers long distances would be unworkable here. The conditions of life on relief works are repellant to families with any trace of respectability. The enforced companionship of strangers, and the exposure of their womenkind to the familiarities of the *mate* and the muharrir are things difficult to face for people whose lives have in the past been spent within their villages. These deterrents operate with much increased force when it is necessary to live on the works. Hence it has happened that our relief works have drawn most of their numbers from the villages immediately adjoining them and have generally exercised little effect at a distance of five miles.

5. The usefulness of relief works has then in these provinces very strict limitations, and village relief and village kitchens must always share the ground with them if life is to be saved. The character of the part to be played by each of these modes of relief, as also by poor-houses, will be noticed further on.

6. *The restrictions to be imposed on relief.*—The "tests" imposed by the Famine Code are almost wholly automatic. Village relief, it is true, rests upon selection. But the Code confines it to the sick and helpless.

Experience has thrown doubt on the efficacy of some of these automatic tests. They may be listed according as they postulate a willingness to submit to—

Confinement and cooked food . . .	In the case of poor-houses.
Cooked food	In the case of kitchens.
The performance of a work test. . .	In the case of relief works.
A daily walk of some distance. . .	
The irksome conditions of a relief camp. .	

There can be no question of the efficacy of the first two tests. Our poor-houses have never attracted the well-to-do. And the value of the cooked food test is apparent to any one who compares his camp experiences of this and last cold weather. Last year crowds hung round for the remains of breakfast or tiffin: this year few have been found willing to take a piece of bread and a blanket with it. The only question is whether the test is not too severe. I will touch on this point again.

7. The distance test fails because it applies so unequally. There can be few works which have no villages in their close vicinity. I do not think that we could successfully attempt to eliminate those who live within a certain distance even if there was another work within a reasonable walking distance.

The test which acts through the disagreeables of a relief camp—the exposure to cold and rain, and to ill-treatment by the *mates* and muharrirs—is again an unfair one. Those who live near the works can practically avoid it by making up family gangs and returning home at night.

We are left with the work test, which has also in my opinion failed to yield all that is expected of it. The task has to be shaped for the inexperienced, and is therefore absurdly light for those accustomed to labour. And it is in my experience most irregularly enforced. To measure up earthwork from day to day is an exceedingly difficult business, and whenever I have been able to check the muharrir's entries by actual measurement, I have found them to grossly overstate the amount of work done. Fining is practically left to the judgment of the work agent, and loses the whole of its effect for good, as the coolies regard its imposition as merely due to bad luck. Under the "task rules" a very large proportion of the workers on relief works have been people who had no real claim to relief at all.

8. I am of opinion that we should gain much in efficiency and still more in economy if we laid somewhat less stress on self-acting tests and more stress on selection. A system which was adopted in the Jabalpur Division during the later months of the famine left it to certain officials to *select* the coolies for ordinary task-work, the remainder being employed on contract terms and paid strictly by results. We have here a principle which should, I think, be recognised in the Code. There is no great difficulty in selecting from a gang of coolies those whose condition entitles them to lenient terms. As a measure of precaution I would provide that all who present themselves should be admitted at the outset to the task-work gangs, the strong being subsequently drafted to gangs who are paid by results, and being thereafter denied admission on task-work terms. Selection should, as a rule, be effected by officials of superior rank to the "officers in charge," but any of the latter class who show capacity might be empowered to select.

9. *The wage rates.*—The wages allowed by the Code are more liberal than their descriptions would imply. The subsistence, or D wage, may be no more than suffices to keep an individual in working health, if he earns it alone. But for families it is extravagant on the principle—well recognised in domestic economy—that "food for two is food for three." The saving in fuel alone counts for something. There seems, moreover, reason to believe that a considerable proportion of the workers regarded the famine wage as a means of supplementing their resources rather than as a means of subsistence. A remarkable fact connected with this famine has been the difficulty experienced in recovering the copper coin in which wages were paid. On some of the works in this Division which were at some distance from a large village it was considered necessary to maintain special shops for the coolies. The daily takings were generally small compared with the daily expenditure in wages. There can be no doubt that a large proportion of the famine wage was hoarded by its recipients.

We cannot, however, distinguish between solitary individuals and members of families, and all who work on the task gangs must be paid the famine wage. But the considerations which I have indicated above may reassure us in insisting on the payment of the strong according to results, even though this may result in their earning less than the minimum.

10. *Relief works.*—I have indicated above that each work should be in two parts, one for "task" and the other for "result" workers. The latter should be paid twice a week according to measurement at *liberal* contract rates, with a limit of the B wage to diggers and the D wage to carriers. This will enable us to fix rates which will not be unfair to the most inexperienced, while limiting the earnings of professional earth-workers. The wage limits might be raised by one-sixth to allow for Sundays. This system makes no provision for the support by "result" workers of their own dependants. I think it rash to assume that they will support them—and to spend money on this assumption—when the organization of famine relief offers so many opportunities for their obtaining relief elsewhere. Any dependants should be given *cooked food only*. I accept Mr. Higham's opinions in regard to tasks for task-workers. But under these proposals strictness in the exaction of a task will lose importance. And it is to be noted that his carrier task postulates that on ordinary road work there should be little more than one carrier to each digger. The proportion of carriers to diggers has generally been much higher than this.

11. As to the *class of works*, metal-breaking is theoretically one of the best, as it gives full employment to women and children. But it is very unpopular; it disables many of the coolies with wounds, and it is often useless. From some points of view the most suitable form of work is straightening and deepening village ponds or tanks, which will often result in much more permanent good to the country than the making of earthen cross-country roads. Tank work offers further advantages in facilities for controlling the workmen, for measuring up their work, and in the number of carriers for whom full employment is provided. The objections to such a scheme are, *firstly*, that it necessitates numerous works, as each tank will not, as a rule, employ more than a thousand workers, and, *secondly*, that tank work tempts to relieve the people of the village in which the tank is situated. But in many parts of the country a tank or pond is to be found in almost every village. Experience in Allahabad has shown that groups of tanks can be supervised as easily as a large road work. And if the workers are *strictly paid by results*, it may be doubted whether employment would be unduly tempting.

12. I do not think that relief works should be kept open after the commencement of the rains. Experience has shown that during the rains they relieve very few beyond the inhabitants of villages closely adjacent. Bad weather renders the exaction of tasks impossible, and the amount of work done is quite disproportionate to the money spent. For those who live on the works conditions are very unhealthy and lead to much sickness and mortality. With the commencement of the rains we must trust to selection as a test of distress (apart from kitchens). It is cheaper and better in every way to relieve the deserving at their homes.

13. *Poor-houses.*—As a means of relief poor-houses are to be condemned. But they are of great use as a test of the pressure of distress, and should be maintained at every tahsil head-quarters. People should be drafted from them to works or village relief at very frequent intervals, and they should, apart from the hospitals attached to them, be managed as merely temporary depôts.

14. *Kitchens.*—Experience has brought into great prominence the utility of village kitchens as a means of giving food to the hungry. Their establishment and management offer little difficulty. Every police post and village school is a possible centre. They are popular with the people, and large numbers of malguzars have been found willing to manage them. The cost of establishment is insignificant, and nearly the whole of the expenditure is charged to actual relief. Children are of course the greater number of those attending. But adults who are in real need of food will be found amongst them. The relief given reaches its aim directly, and is, in the case of the helpless, much more efficacious than grants of money. The desire to save is sometimes apparently stronger than the pangs of hunger. And the recipients are often unable to cook the grain they purchase. I have not come across many cases in which people in real want of food prefer to suffer rather than to accept it in cooked form. The people for whom these kitchens are mainly intended belong to the lowest classes, whose prejudices are more elastic than they are sometimes supposed to be, and who readily clear themselves of a breach of caste rules by some simple act of formal purification. Curiously enough the Gonds have been in this respect one of the most difficult classes to deal with. But they have commonly come to village kitchens when established near their homes.

15. *Village relief.*—This should be given a much more prominent place in the Code than it now occupies, and should be extended to all in evident want as well as to those physically, or for special reasons, unable to seek relief on works. It should be regarded as a security against a failure of other measures to reach the destitute as well as the principal means of relieving the helpless classes of the population. In the first of these respects its grant could at the outset be carefully limited, but should be rapidly expanded as the period of scarcity lengthens and as any indications become apparent of distress outrunning the ordinary measures of relief. The most significant of these indications are crowds at the poor-house gate and wanderers on the roads, either of which should be generally accepted as showing that the grant of village relief is inadequate and should be expanded at once. Judging by past experience in this Division the grant of village relief to 5 per cent. of the population would not be at all excessive in time of acute distress. If its grant be guided by the considerations indicated above, I do not think that there is much risk of over-liberality, provided of course that there is an adequate relief staff. Each village should be visited by a Circle Officer once in at least twenty days, and there should be a European officer in control—if possible two in each tahsil.

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16. In the case of aboriginal people it will be necessary to grant relief in this form with exceptional liberality as soon as signs of distress appear, and to include within its range persons who are capable of doing light work. I think that it would be quite possible to arrange for their employment on petty works of improvement within their village. People of this class are, as a general rule, honest in their dealings with Government, and I have known cases in which village headmen have at their own instance successfully insisted on the performance of some work by those on the gratuitous relief list.

17. I add that there has been nothing to indicate that the grant of gratuitous relief demoralizes the people. Its discontinuance was cheerfully accepted, and careful enquiries have failed to show that private charity did not return to its responsibilities.

18. *General scheme of relief.*—I am inclined to think that the first step to be taken when famine threatens is to open poor-houses and village kitchens. They afford a real test of distress, which no minor defects of management can impair, whereas test-works in the hands of inexperienced managers cannot be relied upon as a gauge of the real necessity of the people. With numerous kitchens established, there is, moreover, reasonable security against the occurrence of illness or death due to actual want. Village relief and relief works would meanwhile be organised, the former at the outset being restricted to the infirm and incapable, but being gradually expanded, till with the commencement of the rains it takes, with village kitchens, the place of relief works as the mainstay of the operations.

19. *Mortality during the famine.*—This has been reported upon in detail, and I merely refer to it here in order to insist on the contributory effect of fever. The four months of the monsoon were extraordinarily unhealthy, especially in the Saugor and Mandla districts, and the death-rates rose because the effects of the famine were intensified by conditions which *accompanied* it, instead of following it, as has been the experience elsewhere. I may be permitted to refer to the extraordinary high mortality which followed the famine of 1878 in some districts of the North-Western Provinces, when (if I remember aright) the death-rate of the Aligarh District rose to 120 per mille in the year as a whole. During the past year some North-Western Provinces districts which showed low death-rates during the period of famine have been visited with great mortality since its close. On the other hand, the death-rates of November and December were in most Central Provinces districts very low indeed, and I may perhaps hazard a conjecture that the circumstances which cause heavy mortality on the restoration of normal conditions of rainfall are more rapid in their action in some parts of India than in others. It is a fact that Mandla and Saugor—the districts in which mortality rose highest in this division—were the two in which the rainfall was heaviest at the commencement of the monsoon, and that at the end of August they were the only two which had received anything approaching the normal quantity.

Written statement of evidence by the Rev. Mr. E. Marston Gordon, *Missionary, Mungeli, Bilaspur District, dated 19th February 1898.*

I am in receipt of a communication, stating that the Famine Commission is "particularly anxious to carefully consider any suggestion which missionaries of experience may have to make."

Not having received particulars as to the nature of the evidence or the suggestions which the Commissioners desire, the remarks below may not appear to be quite to the point. On hearing from you more fully I may be able to make further suggestions.

With regard to myself as a witness, perhaps I should state that I am a member of the American Foreign Christian Missionary Society; age 28 years; missionary experience dates from 1891, when I was appointed to Mungeli. I have been in this district throughout the famine, and my experience is confined to this district. I have, however, endeavoured to visit poor-houses in other districts as opportunity occurred, and have seen those which were opened in Pandaria, Bilaspore, Raipore, Kutni and Jabalpur. During the famine funds to the amount of Rs. 18,000 have passed through my hands as private charity, and I have had the supervision of two relief centres ten miles apart. I have been a regular visitor at the Mungeli poor-house.

Revd. Mr. E. Marston Gordon.

The suggestions I desire to make are as follows:—

I. Might not the roads of the district be maintained in such a condition as to permit of cart traffic at all times of the year? In their present condition it is impossible for carts to pass between the railway stations and the outlying parts of the district during the monsoons. In times of famine for one-third of the year importation is an impossibility, and prices must of necessity rise higher than they would if importation was continued.

II. With reference to Famine Code (1896), Appendix IV, section 2, page 55, I would suggest that some remarks should be inserted as a guidance in the selection of a Superintendent for a poor-house. The success of a poor-house depends

Revd. Mr. E. Marston Gordon.

almost entirely on the character of the Superintendent. He should undoubtedly be a man of strong physique and, if possible, of a commanding appearance and manner, especially adapted to control a large number of persons who have never been subjected to any kind of discipline.

III. With reference to Chapter V, section 34, page 17, may I suggest that preference should be given to the distribution of village relief in the form of grain instead of money. A large majority of the recipients of gratuitous relief come from the improvident classes who are unable to make money go a certain time. Gratuitous relief given under my supervision to people from 40 different villages, in the form of grain, proved greatly preferable to the plan of giving money.

It is my opinion that if village relief in the form of grain distribution was started at the right time, the crowding of the poor-houses and the consequent high death-rate would be avoided, and the district would be saved from that large class of starving wanderers who distribute themselves in all directions during a famine.

Written statement of evidence by MR. G. M. HARRIOTT, *Executive Engineer, in charge of the Chhattisgarh States Roads Division.*

Mr. G. M. Harriott.

I.—DEPARTURES FROM THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES FAMINE CODE, WHICH OCCURRED IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES DURING THE RECENT FAMINE.

1.—*General organization of Relief-works in the Chhattisgarh States Roads Division.*—The relief-works carried out under my charge from funds supplied by Government were organized originally under the orders contained in Central Provinces Public Works Department General Order No. C-498, dated the 26th December 1896, a copy of which is no doubt in the possession of the Commission. A piece-work system with infirm gangs and "field kitchen" was, however, subsequently introduced on them, all under Mr. Penny's rules, copy of which, amended in accordance with the most recent orders of the Local Administration, is attached to this statement for reference.

2. Relief-works carried out from funds supplied by Native States, for which funds were limited and for which extensive establishments were not available, were organized on a simple piece-work system, and the ordinary contract system, under special conditions. The areas in which these last two systems were adopted were, however, generally less distressed than those in which the first two were introduced.

3. Task-work system.

The task system was adopted on the following works:—

Pendra Zamindari, Bilaspur District—

(*i*) Tippan tank embankment.

(*ii*) Pendra-Parasi road.

Pandaria Zamindari, Bilaspur District—

(*iii*) Pandaria, Lormi road.

Raipur District—

(*iv*) Dongargarh-Pandaria road in Gandai, Silheti and Lohara.

(*v*) Raj-Nandgaon-Pentagarh road.

Raj-Nandagaon State—

(*vi*) Dongargaon-Chauki road.

Chauki Zamindari, Chanda District—

(*vii*) Dongargaon-Chauki road.

My experience was that under the conditions laid down in the Central Provinces Public Works Department Code No. C-498, dated the 26th December 1896, or the so-called "task-work" system, sufficient relief was afforded, but this was not effected economically. As soon as they had nothing else to do, people who did not need relief flocked to the works and brought all the children they could with them. The workers were quite content to get the minimum wage only, and to do as little work as possible for it; when they had other work to do, these people sent their women and children to the works. Children 7 to 12 were admitted to the works, and those with younger children were relieved in cash. The result was crowds of children, who proved most troublesome on the works.

The chief reasons for the expensive working of the so-called "task-work" system are that a large establishment is required to work it; under it fraud cannot be easily checked; and that the task fixed cannot be exacted without fines.

The power to fine, which requires most careful application, has to be entrusted to subordinates, who not only cannot be relied on to apply it with caution, but who abuse it to meet their own ends. The result is that the workers who find the minimum wage is, if anything, more than sufficient to meet their requirements, and who are naturally idle, soon make up their minds to do as little as possible because they know the minimum wage is insured.

4. *Piece-work system under Mr. Penny's rules with infirm gangs and kitchen.*—The "piece-work" system under Mr. Penny's rules with infirm gangs on task-work and a field kitchen, was introduced in June and July 1897, on works (ii), (iii) and (v), noted in paragraph 4, when it was found that large numbers of the people, who did not need relief at all, were flocking to the works, and when it was desirable to try and get those on the work to attend to their field work. A copy of these rules, revised according to the orders of the Local Administration, and modified in accordance with proposals made in this note, is herewith forwarded for reference I will have more to say about this system hereafter. I need only state here that under this system not only was the relief afforded sufficient in every way, but it was given most economically and a far better return obtained by the expenditure.

5. *Ordinary piece-work.*—By ordinary piece-work I mean payment-by-results to small bodies of labourers. This was adopted on the following works and was really the most economical system of working:—

Five tanks in the Pandaria Zamindari of the Bilaspur District.

Three tanks in the Kawardha State.

Surface roads in the Phuljhar and Borasambar Zamindaris.

Under this system a time-keeper was put in charge of a tank or section of a road, to which only able-bodied workers were sent for employment. Each worker, or party of workers, had its work separately marked out, and was paid daily by results at the rate of 500 cubic feet to the rupee. The time-keeper measured up the work, and a respectable malguzar of some village near the work was appointed to make the payments. A small commission was given to the malguzar for his trouble. This system worked well, and afforded all the relief required very economically In Pandaria and Kawardha all the weakly people were sent to the infirm gangs and kitchens on the road works. In Phuljhar and Barasambar there were only a very few infirm people, for whom infirm gangs and a small kitchen were opened for a time on one of the roads.

6. *Contract work under special conditions.*—The ordinary contract system under special conditions was adopted on road work in the Bastar State, tanks in the Kowria Zamindari and some work in the Raj-Nandgaon and Kawardha States. The special conditions were that the Contractors had to pay their labourers 75 per cent. of the rates they received under the supervision of my subordinates, and were not to employ any labourers except those drafted to them by the supervising staff. In those parts where distress was not acute, and the only people to be relieved were those who had come in search of work from distressed areas, the system acted perfectly, and was of course very economical. The workers received all the relief they wanted, and there were hardly any complaints of short payment. The success of this system depends entirely on every precaution being taken at the beginning by the supervising staff, to show the workers some simple means of measuring their work, and ascertaining the payment due to them. No difficulty was experienced in doing this.

7. It will be seen from the above remarks that in the States and Zamindaris under my charge, the degree of distress in different parts varied very considerably. Moreover, funds were very limited in some parts, and the strictest economy had to be practised so as to afford relief in the most effective manner from the funds available. The result was that practically every system had to be adopted in some part of my division, and the conclusion I have arrived at from the experience I have had with them, is that a combination of the various systems such as that effected under

Mr. Penny's rules is the most satisfactory method of affording relief. Under such a system ordinary works can be readily converted into test works. It adapts itself automatically to any degree of distress, from contract work under special conditions where there is very little distress and the people are all strong, to very simple "task-work" where distress is very severe and all the people are emaciated. It is economical, as less establishment is required to work it, and the best possible return for the outlay under the circumstances is obtained in each case. It does not lend itself so much to fraud; and finally, at the close of the famine, it acts automatically and gives the most desirable results without any change of system. From my experience during the past famine, I cannot recommend too strongly to the consideration of the Commission the "piece-work" system with infirm gangs and field kitchen, on the lines of Mr. Penny's rules, as the very best means of affording relief during a famine.

8. *Proposals regarding the piece-work system with infirm gangs and kitchen.*— he introduction of this system was probably the most marked departure that was made from the principles of the Central Provinces Famine Code. For, condemned without a trial by the Indian Famine Commission, its adoption was practically prohibited on relief-works, because it was only admissible under the proviso that it was to be optional to the labourers to choose between it and daily wages (see Indian Famine Condensed Report, Part I, paragraph 32). Any one with any experience of relief-workers knows that they would choose daily wage to the exclusion of piece-work.

I have already remarked that the piece-work system applied under Mr. Penny's rules proved successful, but it must be remembered that the good results were all the more satisfactory, because they were obtained after the task-work system had been in force. Opposition from both the staff and workers had to be overcome before success could be insured. When I introduced piece-work, I was told by a large body of workers on the Pendra-Darbasi road that if the "Sircar" wanted the work completed, the "task-work" system must be continued. Workers left the work to try and force a return to the daily wages system, but those who were in need of relief were back in a day or two and worked willingly afterwards on piece-work.

Mr. T. Higham, C.I.E., has dealt very fully and accurately with the arguments for and against piece-work and task-work in paragraphs 21 to 27 of his Report, and after my experience in working these systems during the past famine, I can endorse everything he says.

It has been my experience that under a system of piece-work with infirm gangs and kitchen, or what we might call the combined system, practically all the objections to the task-work and piece-work system applied separately are overcome, while it has the great advantage of reducing the work of the senior members of the staff at the relief camp, and allowing them to give more of their attention to the weakly and emaciated, and thereby affecting the greatest saving of life.

I append a copy of Mr. Penny's rules under which the piece-work system with infirm gangs and kitchen was organized on the works under my charge. I have modified it to suit the proposals which, after my experience during the late famine, have been made by me in this statement, and I am of opinion that all relief works should be organized on some such lines in future. The system is so elastic that it readily adapts itself to all degrees of distress.

With reference to the details of the piece-work system, I have the following suggestions to offer:

9. *Staff in piece-work system.*—The staff proposed was found sufficient on the works on which the system was introduced.

10. *Classification in piece-work system.*—The classification is what was eventually arrived at in practice. I will treat this subject in detail in a separate paragraph.

11. *Supervision and drafting on the piece-work system.*—It was found in practice that though under this system a single charge could afford relief over a much longer length on a road, supervision was considerably simplified because the weakly and emaciated who needed most attention were concentrated under the very eyes of the Officer-in-charge, and relief was more readily afforded along the whole length of the charge owing to the Work Agents of the piece-work section being able to relieve the weakly and emaciated at once and to help them on to the head-quarters of the charge.

12 *Employment of Contractors and Gangers on the piece-work system.*—I believe opinions vary as to whether big Contractors, petty Contractors, or Gangers should be employed for the piece-work section. I have found big Contractors most satisfactory. They have a reputation to sustain, and for fear of disgrace, pay their labourers properly. They do not stoop to bribe Work Agents, and I have therefore found that the latter are only too ready to report any of their failings. Securities can be taken from them which they will take care not to forfeit. Big Contractors cannot, however, always be secured, and I have found that it is necessary to utilise such material as is available. I am therefore of opinion that it should be left to the Executive Engineer to utilize such Contractors or Gangers as he considers best suited to the conditions existing on any particular work.

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13. *Daily payments for piece-work.*—I think daily payments should be insisted on. Rates must vary for different localities. A schedule of rates must therefore be drawn up for each district or, if necessary, part of a district.

Contractors should be given separate sections of works. They should be paid on Public Works Form No. 14, and a security of 10 per cent. on the work done should be retained. Measurements can then always be checked, and over-measurements effectually prevented.

14. *Workers on piece-work to be taught to measure their work.*—The most important point in connection with piece-work is to teach the people how to measure their own work. I have found that this is easily done by distributing rods 5 feet long among the workers, through the Work Agent, and showing them what a hundred cubic feet is. I consider it the most important duty of the Work Agent on a piece-work section to show the workers under him how to measure their work, and to keep them well informed of their rates. Every member of the staff who inspects work, should make it his duty to see that the workers know how to ascertain what they should be paid. My experience is that they learn readily, and can look after their earnings quite well if they are encouraged to complain if not properly paid.

15. *Task-work section of the piece-work organization.*—On the task-work section where the gangs contain infirm workers, I have found that nominal tasks only can be exacted. About 30 per cent. of the task laid down in General Order No. C.-498, dated the 26th December 1896, paragraph 23, can be expected. In fact, I think that the object should be to get these workers strong, and then to draft them to piece-work; and to effect this, while they are on the minimum wages, they must not be overworked.

There should be no fines on the task-work sections, which I think might more correctly be called daily wage sections. An effort should be made to get 30 per cent. of the normal task from these workers for the minimum wage. If cases of persistent laziness occur, they should be punished by being made to work for a dole of cooked food at the kitchen instead of a cash wage. I have found the mere threat of this punishment sufficient to make workers do their best. This does away with the delicate question of fines and the abuses it leads to.

16. *Field-kitchen on the piece-work.*—The rules for the field-kitchen are given in detail, with the necessary forms, in the proposed rules herewith forwarded. A single sheet of instructions for the management of the Public Works kitchens, with only one form, was received after the kitchens on the work under my charge had been organized. I append a copy of these instructions marked B. I found that these left a great deal for the staff to work out themselves, and the return prescribed in the detailed instructions had to be kept up on sheets of paper and scrap books. In short, the detailed instructions with all the forms were absolutely necessary, and I found that, revised according to the more recent orders, they worked well, and did not overwork the staff. I have further modified the detailed instructions now to suit the proposals made in this statement.

I noticed that these kitchens were planned in all sorts of ways, and medical officers inspecting them and the field hospitals were constantly ordering changes and additions. I think it will secure uniformity and save much trouble if a standard plan for the construction of these field kitchens and hospitals in future is drawn up now. Otherwise the benefit of the experience gained during the past famine will be lost.

There seemed to be some difference of opinion regarding the daily rations to be given in the kitchens. Some rules drawn up for their management, laid down the rations given in paragraph 82 of the Central Provinces Famine Code; some those laid down in article 81 of the Central Provinces Famine Code. The latest kitchen rules, a copy of which is

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herewith forwarded, prescribes approximately 9 chittaks for men, 8 for women, 3 to 7¼ for children. It is therefore very desirable that the rations to be given in field kitchens be fixed.

The object to be secured in a field kitchen is to get the inmates strong and fit for work as soon as possible. I am therefore of opinion that the rations should be as liberal as the conditions of the inmates will admit. The proposed rules for kitchens, attached to this statement, empower Hospital Assistants to give special diets to emaciated people. We may therefore assume that those who are not on special diet are able to eat a fair meal without being injuriously affected.

I found that inmates did not improve as rapidly as desirable on the rations laid down in paragraph 82 of the Central Provinces Famine Code. On the other hand, a medical officer objected to the rations laid down in paragraph 81 as too liberal and injurious. I found that the following rations, which are practically a mean between the rations laid down in paragraphs 81 and 82 of the Central Provinces Famine Code, gave very satisfactory results; the quantities are given in chittaks:—

	Men.	Women.	Average for children.
Grain	9	9	5
Pulse	1½	1½	¾
Salt	¼	¼	¼
Ghi or oil	½	½	¼
Vegetables	1	1	½

I found that women required just as much to eat as men and that it only added unnecessary difficulties to the distributions of the doles to treat them differently.

I also found that the proportion of men, women and children fed at a kitchen was, approximately, 1 man to 2 women and 3 children: there was generally a slightly larger proportion of children. In issuing the rations for the day, the following measures of uncooked provisions per unit always proved sufficient, and left a margin of cooked food to be put away, so that a meal could be given at once to any new applicant for relief during the day:—

Average ration.	Per day per unit.
Grain	7 chittaks.
Pulse	1 chittak.
Salt	⅛ do.
Ghi	½ do.
Vegetables	¾ do.

I have found that, as a rule, when money doles are given, dependents and children are considerably neglected by their relations, and that a considerable saving of life is undoubtedly effected by feeding these units at the kitchen. I have caught parents inducing children to bring some of their dole away from the kitchen for them and have seen them take it and eat it. Children at 12 years and under are a nuisance on the works. Such children as are fit to work can be much better employed in light work about or near the camp, where they are not in the way of other workers. The most satisfactory way therefore of relieving all dependents and children of 12 years and under is at the kitchen.

With the exception of the dependents of the workers who may be allowed to return to their working relatives daily, the immates of the kitchen should not be permitted to wander. I am certain that life is lost which might otherwise be saved by allowing these people to go out. They expose themselves unnecessarily, and eat any thing they can get hold of, and consequently frequently lose their lives. Moreover, they make themselves a nuisance to the public.

17. *General classification of workers regardless of the system of organisation adopted.*—The most marked departure from the principle of the Central Provinces Famine Code is the classification of workers as laid down in paragraph 15 of Central Provinces Public Works Department General Order No. C-498, dated the 26th December 1896.

The classification therein laid down is:—

Class B.—Able-bodied men and women not accustomed to the kind of work afforded.

Class D.—Weakly men and women fit for light employment.

Gratuitous dependents.—Men and women dependents on the work, but unable to work.

Children class I.—12 to 16 years, fit to work and classed as adult workers.

Children class II.—*7 to 12 years, fit to work.*

Do. do. III.—Under 7, not in arms, but unfit to work and relieved gratuitously.

Children class IV.—In arms.

Now in practice it was found that workers were required for various purposes such as water-supply, conservancy, attendances at the kitchen hospital, and burial of the dead. Suitable people for these works were not always driven to the works by scarcity, and they therefore had to be induced to give their services by the payment of higher wages. The result was that a special class had at once to be formed for these people as none had been provided.

Again, it is not correct to class the ordinary cultivator as a worker unaccustomed to the class of work provided on a road or tank, generally earthwork. All the work on the roads in my Division is done by village labour in ordinary times.

What really happened in practice was that the diggers got one wage, and the adult carriers and Class D units another. The males and females getting under several scales the same wages.

Children from 12 to 16 were paid at 10 chittaks, which came to 3 pies less than a woman's wage. These children are generally growing, and require sufficient feeding, while they do quite as much if not more work than women. There seems no reason why they should be paid less than women carriers and be classed with them.

Children from 7 to 12 were paid at 6 chittacks, which came generally at 9 pies less than the women carrier's wages. These children did very little work, only got in the way of the other workers, and proved a nuisance generally on the works. I found it better to feed them in the kitchen and employ them on light work in and around the camp, where they proved very useful; so that ultimately the children in Classes II and III were fed at the kitchen.

Male and female dependents were also ultimately fed at the kitchen.

For children in arms, the mothers got an extra 3 pies.

Ultimately therefore the classification was reduced in practice to—

Special—Men and women employed on water-supply, sanitation, cooking, etc.

Diggers.—Men employed in digging.

Others.—Men, women and children from 12 to 16, employed in carrying, breaking clods, etc.

Kitchen inmates.—Men, women and children fed gratuitously at the kitchen.

Children in arms.—There is no doubt that it is very desirable that the classification be as simple as possible.

I found the number of children in arms very insignificant, and I think for the purpose of classification they may be ignored.

For the piece-work system with infirm gangs and kitchen I have already given the classification I propose.

For the present task-work system I think the following classification will meet all requirements:—

Class I.—Specials employed on water-supply, sanitation, cooking, etc.

Class II.—Diggers, whether men or women.

Class III.—Men, women and children over 12 years employed in carrying, breaking clods, or other works in the gangs.

Class IV.—Gratuitous relief units fed at the kitchen: men, women, or children, and children in arms

Women should only be employed to dig when men are not available, and then I think they deserve the same wage as men diggers.

In Class III, men, women and children all do the same amount of work and need the same amount of food, so no distinction in the wages paid them is necessary.

18. *Sunday wages.*—The orders regarding the payment of a wage for Sunday varied, and opinions vary on this point.

I have found that the day they want off is not necessarily Sunday, but the day on which the nearest market to the work is held. If a charge is moved, the off day may have to be changed to suit another market. I have found that when the nearest market is not held on a Sunday, the people leave the works just as much to attend the market on a week day, and forfeit their wages. In fact, I have known gangs of workers leave the works for several days at a time on account of a festival or a marriage or other ceremony.

It is also a well-known fact that the workers do not live only on the grain, on the price of which their wages are reckoned. They live on the cheapest food they can get, and by doing so they save sufficient on their wages to meet their requirements during days that they do not attend work.

I once found five able-bodied men in a camp when all the workers were on the work. On making a very careful enquiry, I found that these men were relatives of the workers who had come from their villages to take back remittances. This was on a relief-work being carried out in a Zamindari, from funds supplied by Government, and while making the above enquiry, I accidentally ascertained from a very reliable source that a large number of the workers were only working in order to earn sufficient cash to be able to pay up their "kists."

Under the above circumstances I do not think that it is necessary to pay wages for a non-working day.

I would therefore recommend that one non-working day in the week be allowed, and that it be left to the Officer-in-charge in each case to fix what day it should be. Also that no wages be paid for the non-working day.

If, however, it is considered desirable to pay wages for the non-working day, I would recommend that one chittak of grain be added to the wage of each class for each of the six working days in the week, to make up for no wage payment for the non-working day.

19. *Wages on present task-work system.*—For the four classes proposed, I think the equivalent in each of the following wages is ample:—

		Chittaks.
Class	I	21
,,	II	19
,,	III	13

I have already given, under the head of kitchen, in connection with the organization of the piece-work system the rations I propose to be given in kitchens, so need not repeat them here.

The conclusion I have come to after very careful observation is that payment-by-result or piece-work is the only way of obtaining a fixed task for a fixed sum. The offer of a higher wage as an inducement to do a higher task than the minimum, has, as I have already said, no effect on the relief-worker for the reasons I have given. A number of workers will no doubt be booked for the higher tasks and wages, but the Gang Muharrir is, in my opinion, the only one who profits by the inducement.

Starting with a higher wage and fining down to a minimum, ends, I find, in exactly the same results.

Again, the question of unlimited fines is a most delicate one to deal with, and requires the utmost caution. In my opinion the class of men I have had to deal with on the staff of relief-works cannot be safely trusted with such power, and I am sure that without unlimited fines, full tasks cannot be exacted. If therefore the present so-called "task-work" system is to be continued with a minimum wage, I am strongly of opinion that fines should be abolished entirely. There should be only one wage for each class; efforts should be made as now to obtain the tasks fixed for the fixed wage from each class, and that cases of persistent idleness be punished by giving the offenders cooked food for their work at the kitchen instead of cash wages. I have found the threat of a kitchen dole in lieu of cash payment have the desired result wherever I have tried it. There need be no fear of this punishment, as it does not give the Officer-in-charge power which he can abuse much.

II.—Degree of success which has attended the measures adopted, considered primarily with regard to the relief of distress and the saving of life, and secondarily with regard to economy.

20. In my humble opinion, though the relief measures, as far as relief-workers are concerned, have effected practically all the saving of life that could have been secured, they have just fallen short of sufficiency in not having been undertaken soon enough. I do not think that much reduction could have been effected in the mortality, but I think that a good deal of suffering could have been avoided if relief had been offered earlier; I attribute this entirely to the defective task-work system on which we are working.

I think it will be generally admitted that the most suitable form of relief that can be offered at the commencement of a famine is work.

It is a well-known fact that during ordinary times, crowds of people can be got on to a work for daily wages, so that when there is any distress at all, people readily flock to a work in much larger crowds for daily wages.

It is laid down in paragraph 13 of the Central Provinces Famine Code, that on the first indication of distress one or more test-works are to be opened in the affected area, and that employment should be offered to the needy on the strict condition that labour is paid for at task-work rates and not daily rates. But in the same paragraph it is stated that these "test-works" are to be regulated strictly according to the provisions for relief-work.

Now the provisions for relief-work prescribe task-work with a minimum wage. The result is that the daily rate stage is very soon reached, and the crowds come on, whether they are really in need of relief or not.

The result in my opinion is that "test-works" are begun with far too great caution and in very insufficient numbers. There is considerable delay before it is ascertained that there is considerable distress, and before relief-works are opened, and during this delay the people lose ground, migrate to what they believe are less distressed tracts, become emaciated, and we then have to begin at the wrong end and undertake cure instead of prevention.

My opinion is that as soon as it is known that there is likely to be a general failure of crops over any area, steps should be taken at once to open works freely over the area, on such a system that full tasks can be exacted and the works, if necessary, developed into relief-works.

It will be seen that the piece-work system with infirm gangs and kitchen suits this purpose perfectly. The test-work would offer piece-work only at first, and infirm gangs could be begun and the kitchen added as these were required. If the piece-work system be adopted, there need be no fear of attracting large crowds by daily wages, and test-works *can be opened up freely at a very early stage of the famine. Relief will thus be available to those who need it before they suffer privation, and people will be prevented from drifting into the emaciated stage.*

From an economical point of view, I think the relief measures in connection with relief-works have failed to effect their object owing entirely to the defective "task-work" system. The saving of life would, I consider, have been equally well effected at much less expense and with a better return in work by a piece-work system with infirm gangs and kitchen; and if the saving in expenditure thus effected had been utilized in starting relief measures earlier, much suffering might have been avoided.

III.—Other Recommendations on the future management of Relief measures.

21. In the previous paragraphs I have stated my opinions on the measures and methods of working which seem to me to be likely to prove most effective in future. There are one or two other points which I think deserve notice.

22. During the recent famine considerable difficulty was experienced in obtaining the necessary staff for relief-works. This of course occurred (as it always will do) at the most critical time when the largest number of works were open. The result was that men who knew nothing of relief-work, were sent out to take charge of them, or to work on them in other subordinate posts. The unsatisfactory working of such an arrangement needs no comment. I think that steps should be taken to guard against this in future, and I would recommend that the nearest relief-work to the head-quarters of a district should be utilized as a work on which to train the staff required for the other works in the district.

Immediately it is found that relief-works have to be opened, applications should be invited from members of respectable families in the district for posts on them. Selections should be made from these, and they should be sent out to the work chosen for training them on. They should be appointed on probation on nominal salaries till they learn their work, when they can be drafted to works that are opened as required.

This arrangement necessitates some additional expenditure in training these men, but I feel sure this will be more than saved by the men knowing their work when they are posted to works.

23. *Method of mustering and making payments.*—I am of opinion that the present method of payment is most objectionable for two reasons:—

(*a*) The Gang Muharrir who is the lowest paid man in the supervising staff is entrusted with the disbursement.

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(*b*) The Gang Registers, which are the documents on which the payments are made, are not submitted as vouchers with cash accounts.

The Gang Muharrir writes up the registers himself, and then makes the payments. It is therefore difficult to check fraud on his part, because he takes care to commit it when he finds the Officer-in-charge is busy elsewhere. I have always found it the rule to entrust disbursements to the highest paid official available, but we seem to reverse the system on relief-works. I would recommend that the Gang Muharrirs write up the Gang Registers, and the Work Agents make disbursements.

Instead of having a Gang Register for a week, I would recommend a Gang Register-sheet for each day ; and a Gang Register book for each gang.

The musters should be written up daily in the Register-sheet by the Gang Muharrir. He will sign the sheet and hand it over to the Work Agent who will get the cash from the Officer-in-charge, make the payments, sign the sheet, and hand it over to the Officer-in-charge after payment. The Officer-in-charge will then make the entry in his Cash-book, and submit the daily Gang Register-sheet signed by him, as his voucher, for the payment. In this way the initial document on which payments are made will form the voucher, and no less than five people will see it, for the Officer-in-charge, Sub-cashier, and Clerk will no doubt both come in contact with it. Any fraud is sure to come to light sooner or later.

Under the present system the Officer-in-charge submits his Day-book as the voucher for his disbursement. He can really enter what he likes in this Day-book, for no check can be effected till an Inspecting Officer comes round, and even then, that officer has so much to do, that he cannot go through all the accounts. But very often on the approach of an Inspecting Officer, an office hut catches fire and the Gang Registers and Gang Muharrir's Day-books get destroyed and then no check can be effected.

It is very desirable that a history of each gang be kept on the work, and for this purpose the entries in the Daily Gang Register-sheet should be copied into a Gang Register-book and kept on the work. From these books the abstracts for the weekly returns should be prepared.

I do not think the entry of names in the back of the Gang Register is necessary. It serves no good purpose, while I have found that it is constantly made an excuse for delay in making payment.

I think daily payments should be enforced, and the Officer-in-charge be made to submit his cash account for each day's payments on the day the payments are made or by the following morning at the latest.

24. I think that Sub-Divisional Officers are overburdened with accounts, and consequently cannot give as much time as they should to inspecting and organizing works and checking accounts. I think the whole of a Sub-Divisional Officer's time should be given up to organizing and inspecting works.

To give effect to the above proposals, I would recommend that the accounts branch of the Division Office be strengthened sufficiently to deal promptly with the daily accounts as they come in from each work. The supply of hands for this work should be liberal, and, if necessary, an additional Accountant should be appointed to supervise the work. Any Officer-in-charge, whose daily accounts are not received regularly, should be reported at once, and the Sub-Divisional Officer ordered to inspect his work as soon as possible. It should also be the duty of his accounts officer to see that funds for works are kept replenished, and to train men for the posts of Sub-Cashiers and Clerks for the relief-works.

Under an organisation of this kind, the Executive Engineer will be able to control expenditure on works better, the Sub-Divisional Officer will have more time to organise work and check fraud. Delays in payments of wages will be quickly brought to notice and much greater efficiency secured. The additional expense of a strong accounts officer at head-quarters will very soon pay for itself by the check on fraud that will be effected.

25. *Supply of Tools and Materials.*—During the famine there is a large demand for tools and materials of all kinds on works. It is often very difficult for Officers-in-charge to obtain what they require for the work themselves. I think therefore that it is very desirable that a special Sub-division for tools and stores be formed at the head-quarters of each Division. The Officer-in-charge could then apply to the Sub-divisional Officer in charge of the stores for tools and stores that he required. Returns of tools and plant and stores should be submitted monthly to this Sub-Divisional Officer from each work, and at the end of the famine it would be his duty to deal with all the tools and stores in stock. Such an arrangement will afford considerable relief to Sub-Divisional Officers in charge of works and to the Executive Engineer.

A.

Mr. Penny's Rules for organising a Piece-work charge with Infirm Gangs and Kitchen, modified to suit the proposals made in Mr. Harriott's Statement.

I.—Conditions to be observed in organising a Relief-work on the Piece-work System.

Staff required.

The Staff required for a single charge will usually be—

1 Officer-in-charge.
1 Sub-Overseer.
1 Work Agent to each separate section of piece-work and task-work.
1 Hospital Assistant.
1 English-knowing Clerk.
1 Treasure-Guard, consisting of 1 Head Constable and 2 Constables.

This staff must not be increased without the Executive Engineer's sanction.

Classification of the workers.

People seeking relief will be classified under the following four heads :—

Class I.—All specials on task-work and piece-work.

Class II.—Piece-workers—able-bodied men, women and children.

Class III.—Task-workers—weakly men, women and children who are able to do light work.

Class IV.—Kitchen immates. Very emaciated adults, all children under 12 years of age not in arms, and dependents of Class III workers.

System of relief to be provided for the above four classes.

Relief will be provided for the above four classes separately in the following manner. All applicants for work must be admitted in the first instance and then drafted as described below :—

With the exception of a suitable section of the work near the head-quarters of the Officer-in-charge where the greatest supervision can be effected, the remainder of the work will be given out on piece-work (or what may at once be called petty-contract under special conditions), to gangers, petty contractors or big contractors. The conditions of this are detailed hereafter. All the Class III workers will be drafted straight to the piece-work for employment by them under the conditions of their agreements, and under the direct supervision of the sub-overseer assisted by a work agent.

The Class III workers will all be drafted to the small section reserved near the head-quarters of the Officer-in-charge for employment on it under a work agent on the task-work system.

No person must be compelled to accept task-work who elects for piece-work.

The gratuitous dependents, Class IV, will be sent to the field kitchen, which will be under the management of the Hospital Assistant.

Supervision.

The Sub-overseer will supervise the whole work professionally. He will be assisted in supervising the piece-work by work agents, but the sub-overseer must, when preparing bills for the contractors, make the measurements himself.

The Hospital Assistant will be in medical charge of the whole work, and will manage the field kitchen. The kitchen and its arrangements will be directly under his charge, but except in very emergent cases, which must be immediately reported, the Hospital Assistant will not be permitted to admit any dependents to the field kitchen without the previous sanction of the Officer-in-charge.

One or more work agents will supervise the *task work section* and act as work agents and gang muharrirs combined for the Class III workers.

The applicants will be received by the Officer-in-charge and the Hospital Assistant every morning. They will be most carefully classified by these two officials, and when this is done, the distribution will be carried out in the following manner. Work agents in charge of piece-work must freely admit all applicants who may come to them direct.

Receiving and drafting workers.

All the Class II workers will be drafted off to the various contractors proportionately to the work given them, the distribution being arranged so that the people will be sent to the sections of the work nearest to their homes. This class must, if they want relief, accept piece-work. They can be allowed no option.

All the Class III workers will be drafted to the work agent in charge of the task-work section, and he will form them into gangs and give them work.

All Class IV applicants will be sent to the field kitchen to be enrolled and provided for there.

II.—CONDITIONS TO BE OBSERVED AND ENFORCED IN GIVING OUT PIECE-WORK CONTRACTS.

1. The ganger must stay on the work and supervise and direct it.

2. He must employ no labour except that drafted to him by the Officer-in-charge.

3. He may employ the workers either by piece-work, by daily wages, or by the cowrie system. The workers must work by piece-work if required to do so, or leave the work. But they must be allowed the option of demanding piece-work in preference to the daily wage or the cowrie system.

4. If he employs the workers by piece-work, he must pay them the rates fixed by the Executive Engineer and entered in the schedule attached to his bond, which also gives the rates to be paid to the contractor. In cases other than those noted the proportion of his rate which he must allow them will be 75 per cent.

5. If he employs them by daily labour, he must pay them not less than the minimum wage calculated on the price of grain fixed for the work.

6. If he employs them on the cowrie system he must fix the cowrie payment, so as to allow them to earn the minimum wage in 9 hours' work.

7. The contractor must pay labour daily, or twice a week, as ordered by the Sub-Divisional Officer.

8. All necessary arrangements for the water-supply and sanitation and for hutting the workers will be made by the Officer-in-charge and paid for separately, but the ganger will be held responsible for seeing that tatties, bamboos and other material supplied for shelter are not removed by workers from the works.

9. The contractor must submit to any check and inspection with regard to the treatment of his workers by officials authorized to effect such check.

10. Tools, such as phaoras, picks and stone-breaking hammers, will be supplied by the Public Works Department: baskets and perishable stores by the contractor.

11. The contractor must employ all the workers drafted to him by the Officer-in-charge. As long as he does so, he may be employed, but he must be discharged as soon as he fails to do so.

12. The work agents will keep up Form No. 3, field accounts for the piece-workers, and will submit it weekly to the Officer-in-charge, who will prepare and submit the weekly report, Form No. 4, as usual, showing in it the piece-workers and task-workers separately. The Sub-Divisional Officer will submit Form No. 5, as usual, and include the piece-workers in his figures.

13. The contractor is on no account to sublet any work.

14. The sub-overseer will measure up the work done by each contractor every week, enter the measurements in Public Works measurement books, prepare the bills in Form No. 14, and submit them through the Officer-in-charge to the Sub-Divisional Officer for payment. All bills will be marked "Famine-relief accounts."

15. Each work agent in charge of a piece-work section will be given a small imprest to enable him to relieve and draft infirm people to the task-work section. He will give infirm people applying to him for task-work, each a day's minimum wage, and send them at once under the charge of a peon to the Officer-in-charge for employment on task-work, and obtain a receipt from the Officer-in-charge for them, which he will submit with his accounts as a voucher for his payments.

These rates are merely given as an example, and must be fixed to suit varying circumstances and localities.

Schedule referred to in paragraph 4.

Sub-head of work.	Normal rate.	Rate to be at 10 seers per rupee. Normal rate with 20 per cent. added.	Rate to be given to labourers at 10 seers per rupee = 75 per cent. of normal rate increased by 20 per cent	RATES TO BE ALLOWED TO CONTRACTOR.			RATES TO BE PAID BY CONTRACTORS TO LABOURERS.			REMARKS.
				Grain at 10 seers per rupee.	Grain at 9 seers per rupee.	Grain at 8 seers per rupee.	Grain at 10 seers per rupee.	Grain at 9 seers per rupee.	Grain at 8 seers per rupee.	
	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.	
Earthwork in road embankment.	3 12 0	4 8 0	3 6 0	4 8 0	4 12 0	5 0 0	3 6 0	3 10 0	3 14 0	
Moorum in road embankment.	5 0 0	6 0 0	4 8 0	6 0 0	6 4 0	6 8 0	4 8 0	4 12 0	5 0 0	
Clearing earth over moorum quarries.	5 0 0	6 0 0	4 8 0	6 0 0	6 4 0	6 8 0	3 6 0	3 10 0	3 14 0	
Excavating moorum at quarries.							4 8 0	4 12 0	5 0 0	
Carrying moorum to the roadside up to ½ a mile and stacking it there . .	5 0 0	6 0 0	4 8 0	6 0 0	6 8 0	7 0 0	4 8 0	5 0 0	5 8 0	
Carrying moorum to the roadside for ½ mile to ¾ mile .	7 8 0	9 0 0	6 12 0	9 0 0	9 8 0	10 0 0	6 12 0	7 4 0	7 12 0	
Carrying moorum to the roadside for ¾ mile to 1 mile .	10 0 0	12 0 0	9 0 0	12 0 0	12 8 0	13 0 0	9 0 0	9 8 0	10 0 0	

The above rates have been estimated as accurately as possible from a knowledge of rates usually paid, but if experience shows that they should be modified, this may be done with the Executive Engineer's sanction.

Rates for other works not noted in the schedule are to be fixed in each case. The labourers to get 75 per cent. of that given to the contractor.

III.—CONDITIONS TO BE OBSERVED IN CARRYING OUT THE TASK-WORK SECTION.

1. One or more work agents will supervise this portion of the work from the gangs, keep the gang registers and make the payments.

2. The Class III workers on this section will be paid the Class III wage calculated on the rate fixed by the Commissioner of the Division for grain.

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3. Although they are paid the Class III wage, an effort must be made to get the workers to do at least 30 per cent. of the task laid down in G. O. No. C.-498, dated the 26th December 1896, paragraph 23.

4. As soon as any of the workers get strong and fit to do a full task, they will be drafted by the Officer-in-charge to the contractors for employment by them on piece-work.

5. The work agents must only employ men drafted to them by the Officer-in-charge. They are on no account to admit any workers without the sanction of the Officer-in-charge.

6. The work agents in charge of the task-work will keep up the gang registers and Form No. 2 as usual. They will make payments daily and submit Form No. 2 every day to the Officer-in-charge.

7. The Officer-in-charge will prepare Form No. 3, enter up payments in his cash-book, and submit, the accounts daily or weekly as ordered by the Executive Engineer.

IV.—Conditions to be observed in managing the kitchen.

1. The field kitchen will be managed by the Hospital Assistant on the relief-works. In the absence of a Hospital Assistant, the Sub-Divisional Officer will appoint a Manager.

2. He may, when necessary, be allowed the following subordinate staff, which (with the exception of the muharrirs) should be selected from the relief-workers :—

1 Muharrir on R10 a month.	On A Class wage.
1 Cook for every 100 units.	
1 Sweeper do.	
1 Water-carrier do.	
Warder do.	
4 Gate-keepers [two for the kitchen yards and two for day and night ward on Class (*b*) enclosures].	

3. Cooked food will be supplied at kitchens on relief-works to the following people :—

Class (*a*) ... {
- Dependents of Class III, or task-workers, including children of 12 years and under (not being infants at the breast).
- Non-working children of Class II, or piece-workers, to be admitted under the special orders of the Deputy Commissioner only.

Class (*b*) ... {
- Applicants for relief, men, women and children over 12 years of age, who are obviously unfit for work, but are likely to be rendered fit for work by proper feeding within 15 days. Such persons, if not fit for work in 15 days, will be drafted under the orders of the Deputy Commissioner to a poor-house or to village relief. Children 12 years of age and under not dependents of workers.

4. A nominal register will be kept in Form No. II appended, of all units admitted to the field kitchen. A separate register will be kept for each class. Class (*a*) will only be admitted to the kitchen yards at meal times. Class (*b*) will be fed and lodged at the kitchen and kept there.

5. Each unit of Class (*a*) will be furnished with a ticket which it must exhibit before it can be admitted at meal time to the kitchen yard. These tickets should be prepared by the work agents under whom the workers to whom the dependents belong are working, and should contain the following information :—

Number of gang.
Name of dependent.
Name of member of gang on whom dependent.
Date of issue.

Signature of Work Agent.

6. Tickets will be prepared for the units of Class (*b*) by the Hospital Assistant, or by the kitchen muharrir under the Hospital Assistant's orders, and will contain the following information :—

Register number.
Name of inmate.
Date of admission.

Signature of Hospital Assistant.

7. For first admission the tickets will be presented to the Officer-in-charge, who will initial and date them, and then send them on to the Hospital Assistant, who will do likewise and receive the applicant.

8. The following structures will be required for the field kitchen :—

A cooking shed and a store-room for stores and utensils, with two enclosures, one for adults and the other for children, dependents, Class (*a*).

A separate shed with an enclosure surrounding it for Class (*b*) recipients, in which they will be lodged and fed. This shed and enclosure will be in three parts, one for males, one for females and one for children.

9. The inmates of the field kitchen will receive the following ration :—

Articles of Food.	For men.	For women.	For children.	Average ration per day per unit.
	Chhattaks.	Chhattaks.	Chhattaks.	Chhattaks.
Flour of the coarsest grain or clean coarse rice.	9	9	5	7
Pulse	1½	1½	½	1
Salt	½	½	½	⅛
Ghi or oil, whichever is cheaper	½	½	½	½
Condiments and vegetables .	1	1	½	½

The above quantities will be divided into two doles, one to be given in the morning and the other in the evening. The Hospital Assistant may give very emaciated people special diet or extra comforts, such as milk, etc., when he considers this necessary.

10. Before a meal is served, the Hospital Assistant will count the inmates of each class and enter their number up in the kitchen register, Form No. I. He will supervise the distribution of the food, and see that the utensils are collected, cleaned, and stored after the meal.

11. The Officer-in-charge, with the previous approval of the Sub-Divisional Officer, will appoint a suitable agent to provide supplies required for the kitchen. The Hospital Assistant will draw his supplies from this agent by indent on Form No. V, one copy of which he will give to the agent to present for payment to the Officer-in-charge, and another he will retain for reference. The Hospital Assistant must always receive these supplies personally, and he or his muharrir must enter up at the same time the register of receipts, Form No. III.

12. The Hospital Assistant must personally issue the rations for each meal. He or his muharrir must at the same time enter up the register of issues, Form No. III.

13. The warders will guard the stores, maintain order during meal time, observe the issue of doles and report any short issue; they will inspect each recipient and kitchen servant as he leaves the yard after each meal, and see that neither food nor utensils are removed.

14. The gate-keepers will see that only ticket-holders are admitted to the kitchen yard. They will help the cook between meals, and prevent Class (*b*) recipients leaving their yards.

15. The Hospital Assistant, with the help of the kitchen muharrir, will keep up the following kitchen registers and returns :—

Register I.—Number and description of Class (*a*) and (*b*) dependents fed daily at the kitchen.

Register II.—Number and description of Class (*b*) units lodged and fed at the kitchen.

Do. III.—Receipts and issue of stores received.

Do. IV.—Stock-book of utensils of the kitchen.

Do. V.—Indent for supplies required for the kitchen.

Do. VI.—Weekly Return.

Do.—Imprest Cash-book, P. W. Form No. 3.

16. The Hospital Assistant will be given a small advance for the payment of subordinate staff and petty expenses. The advance will be sufficient to cover a week's outlay. He will keep his accounts in Public Works Department Imprest Cash-book, Form No. 3, and submit it twice a week to the Officer-in-charge for recoupment.

17. On each Saturday the Hospital Assistant will submit to the Officer-in-charge a Return in Form No. VI appended.

18. As soon as any dependents, Class (*a*), or inmates, Class (*b*), get strong enough for light work, it will be the duty of the Officer-in-charge, acting under the advice of the Hospital Assistant, to draft them to the Class III or task-work gangs. The Officer-in-charge will be held responsible for any people found in the kitchen who are able to do light work.

19. An inspection book must be kept up at each kitchen in which Inspecting Officers will record their notes. A copy of each note so recorded must be forwarded by the Officer-in-charge to the Executive Engineer, through the Sub-Divisional Officer, as soon as the note is made.

KITCHEN REGISTER No. I.

Date.	NUMBER FED.								
	Class (*a*).				Class (*b*).			Total.	Amount of food used.
	Gang number.	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.		

KITCHEN REGISTER No. II.

Number and description of Class recipients lodged and fed at Kitchen No._____ on Relief work at_____

Serial number.	Date of admission.	Name, sex, caste, age.	Date of being placed on full diet.	Orders of Medical Officers.	Date of transfer to relief-work.

KITCHEN REGISTER No. III.

Receipts / Issue of Supplies of Stores Received.

Number of Indent.	Date of receipt or issue.	Rice.	Dhal.	Salt.	Tamarind	Chillies.	Onions.	Ghi.	Oil.	Signature of Hospital Assistant.

KITCHEN REGISTER No. IV.

Stock-book of Utensils of Kitchen No. on the Relief-work at

Number of articles.	Description of utensils.	Date of receipt in store.	Deduct losses with date of report of loss.	Balance in store.	Date of verification with signature of the Hospital Assistant.

The balance in stock should be verified weekly by the Hospital Assistant.

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FORM No. V.

Indent for Supplies required for Kitchen No. ____ *at the Relief-work at* ____ *date* ____

1	2	3	4	Description and quantity of supplies required.												6	7
				Rice.		Dhal.		Salt.		Tamarind.		Chillies.		Onions.		Remarks.	
Rations required on minimum scale (Article 8 of Code).	Number of rations.	Number of days' supply.	Total (column 2 multiplied by column 3).	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.		I certify that I have received the articles specified in this Indent.
For men .																	
,, women .																	
,, children, Class I .																	
,, ,, II .																	
,, ,, III .																	
Total .																	

Hospital Assistant.

Hospital Assistant.

Date

FORM No. VI.

Weekly Returns to be submitted to the Officer-in-charge every Saturday.

	Men.	Women	Children	
Number of persons of Class (*a*) and (*b*) fed each day—				
Sunday .				
Monday .				
Tuesday .				
Wednesday .				
Thursday .				
Friday .				
Saturday .				
Number of persons of Class (*c*) and (*d*) fed each day				
Sunday .				
Monday .				
Tuesday .				
Wednesday .				
Thursday .				
Friday .				
Saturday .				

Hospital Assistant.

B.

Instructions for the management of Public Works Department Kitchens.

I.—These kitchens were originally intended for small children belonging to people on the works. Under recent orders all dependents, of whatever age, are to be admitted, as well as any starving people unconnected with the workers who apply for food.

II.—The persons attending each kitchen will then be classed according as they are (*a*) connected with the works and (*b*) unconnected with the works. Under class (*a*) will fall all non-working dependents, whether children or adults, except babies in arms. Children over 7 who are too thin to do much work may be classed as dependents if they are willing to take cooked food. No cash payment is to be made to any dependent.

III.—Any one who brings an order of admission from a Circle Officer (Revenue Inspector) or officer of superior rank must be admitted.

IV.—The food to be given is a "khichri" of boiled rice and dâl,—five parts rice one part dal—some salt should be added of course, and if possible a little ghi or oil. The standard measure should be a tin pot $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. This holds the cooked equivalent of 3 chittaks.

Three of these measures should be given to each adult man.

Two and three-quarters to each adult woman.

From one to two-and-a-half to each child, according to age.

In preparing each day's food the average may be taken as 5 chittaks.

V.—It is well to distribute twice daily if possible. But if the kitchen is crowded, this will be difficult and one meal will suffice. People should be allowed to take away what they cannot eat on the spot.

VI.—One cook will suffice for 150 to 200 children. A water-carrier and muharrir will be required, and perhaps a warder to keep order.

VII.—Persons of Class (*a*) will be shown as at present on the register of their gang. The gang muharrir should give each of them a ticket showing:—

Number of gang.
Name and class.
Date of issue.

It will be well to maintain a separate attendance register for persons of Class (*b*), giving names in the first column and providing a column for each day in the month. They also should be given tickets.

VIII.—The attendance of each day should be abstracted in a register of the following form:—

DATE.	NUMBER FED.												Amount of food used.
	Class (*a*.)						Class (*b*).					Total.	
	Gang No.	Men.	Women.	Children I.	Children II.	Children III.	Men.	Women.	Children I.	Children II.	Children III.		

Receipts and expenditure should be shown in a simple form of *jama-kharch*, extracts from which will serve as bills for replenishing an imprest or as vouchers for expenditure. The amount of food charged for in the *jama-kharch* should of course correspond with the amounts shown in the attendance register.

IX.—Kitchen tickets should be furnished with string so as to be carried hung on the neck. A convenient material is a thin sheet of zinc on which entries can be written indelibly with either sulphuric acid or *nila tutia*.

Written answers to the Commission's questions by Mr. G. M. Harriott, *Executive Engineer, Chhattisgarh States Roads Division.*

*1. The whole Division was affected.

2. The failure of the rains and harvest in the Raipur and Bilaspur Districts and to the partial failures of rain and harvest and abnormally high prices in the Sambalpur District and the surrounding Feudatory States.

3. I cannot go into details as I have not figures to refer to, but I think it will be sufficient to say that the rains usually continue through September and a part of October, while in 1896 there was no rain after the end of August.

Prices for food-grains were more than double those of other years, and I believe higher than those experienced in past famines.

4. Preceding seasons had been favourable except in parts. In the north-west corner of the Division in the Mungeli and Simga tahsils and in Kawardha and Pandaria, there had been partial failure both of the previous rabi and kharif crops.

5. I think the population usually enjoys a fair measure of material well-being; no section of it, as far as I know, is usually in a precarious condition. The population is fairly large.

6. The crops are entirely dependent on both timely and sufficient rainfall.

7. In the Raipur and Bilaspur Districts I think there is practically no reserve. The Railway carries away all the grain that can be spared for export. There is, I think, about a sufficient reserve for 6 months in the Sambalpur District and for about 12 months in the Southern and Eastern Feudatory States, but these reserves are soon drained during a famine in Raipur and Bilaspur as recent experience proved.

8. The extent and severity of the distress on this occasion was, I think, twice as great as it was during the last famine.

9. I think too hopeful a view was taken of the extent of the failure at the beginning of the famine. I also think that the resources of the people were over-estimated—so much so, that it was I believe supposed that they could find their own seed-grain which in the end had to be supplied. This, coupled with the caution that had to be used in starting test work on the task-work system, in my opinion, delayed opening up of test works in sufficient numbers all over the affected areas, and consequently retarded the timely development of a sufficient number of relief-works. The result was that a larger number of weakly people had to be dealt with when the relief-works were developed.

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10, 11 and 12. Being in camp I am unable to deal with figures relating to the numbers on works. I am, however, convinced that a great many people were relieved on works who did not need relief. I attribute this to the so-called "task-work" system. Having nothing to do these people came on to the work knowing that the minimum wage was insured for very little work. As soon as piece-work was introduced these people left, and only those who needed relief remained.

13. No. I think all the people who needed relief came on to the relief-works or received village relief. I know that people were very reluctant to leave their homes to go any distance to works, because their homes were generally destroyed if they did go. They did, however, come on to the works eventually, and it was these who generally came on in a weakly state.

14. I think the measures were insufficient, inasmuch as they were not begun on an extensive enough scale at a very early stage of the famine. I think too much time is wasted in gauging the extent and severity of the distress. The delay is, I think, due to a great extent to the defective "task-work" system which is ill-adapted for the purpose of relief. It can be remedied by a system of piece-work with infirm gangs and kitchens.

15. Speaking generally from the mortality point of view, I would say that the relief measures were under the circumstances successful. If extensive relief had been afforded earlier, I think there would have been less weakly people to deal with.

16. A piece-work system with infirm gangs and kitchens was introduced when it was found that numbers of people flocked to the works who did not need relief. This decreased the numbers by sending those who did not really need relief away from the works. It did not exclude people who needed relief from the work, but by removing the others, allowed those on the works to be better attended to.

17. No. The system only affected some of the able-bodied, and it was introduced when these people were on the point of leaving the work to attend to their fields. In some cases they had left the works when the system was introduced. Moreover, the people who left the works were only a small proportion of those receiving relief. They were therefore in exceedingly small proportion of the whole population, and could not possibly have made any appreciable impression on the death-rate.

18. As far as my experience goes, the tests were applied, but they were not applied early enough and on a sufficiently extensive scale at an early date: nor was the system of application satisfactory.

19. All persons who could work were required to work as a condition of receiving relief, but under the system adopted the tasks prescribed could not be exacted from the able-bodied who were well able to perform them.

20. Yes.

21. I am inclined to think that in parts of the distressed areas, the numbers of persons relieved to whom the labour test could not be applied were larger than they might have been. This was due to the objection of the people to leave their homes to go to distant relief-works. Such people grew weak and emaciated and had ultimately to be put on gratuitous relief. I attribute this to the want of some provision under which people who cannot show that they have sufficient means of subsistence can be made to go to relief-works.

22. No. Conditions were such that the tasks could not be exacted while the minimum wage was insured to those who could perform the tasks. The tasks were generally full. In my opinion, paid in cash to several members of a family, the wage was more than a bare subsistence one.

23. Relief-works have been more numerous. The greater number of the workers have lived in their villages. Residence on a relief-work is disliked, and it does not constitute an effective test. I frequently found the houses of people who had gone to relief-works burnt in villages and numbers of people informed me that they would not leave their houses on this account, till forced by hunger to do so. My opinion is that numerous small works scattered over a distressed area near the homes of the people afford much greater relief than one large work.

24 and 25. I cannot answer these as I have not got references in camp.

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* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

Mr. G. M. Harriott.

26. Yes. This was the case in parts of the distressed area. I attribute this to the fact that, having very scanty reserves, the people realized the scarcity sooner. I also attribute it to the task-work system, where, owing to the minimum wage limit, it is soon converted to a daily wage system.

27. I believe "gratuitous relief" was given about equally through poor-houses, kitchen and village relief.

28. I think gratuitous relief in houses was confined to persons really in want and the classes specified in the Code.

29. I am of opinion that the village relief has a demoralising effect, not only on the people relieved, but on other members of a village. I have heard of cases where poor people on village relief have been relieved of their relief by others.

30. I cannot give these figures, as I have not got them in camp. I do not, however, think that the relief has been economically administered.

31. I cannot answer this.

32. I cannot answer this.

33. I consider the task-work system for relief-works most defective and extravagant.

34 to 38. Are not in my province.

39 to 49. I have dealt with these questions fully in a separate detailed statement. All I need add here is that the people on the works preferred the "task-work" system, though those who needed relief accepted the piece-work system and worked well under it after they had tried it. Intelligent natives, however, of all classes were unanimous in the opinion that the "task-work" system was unsuitable and most expensive, while they equally approved of the piece-work system with infirm gangs and kitchens.

52. This varies according to the condition of the workers. An average should I think be struck from the number employed on all road-works.

53. Yes. All those in the Chhattisgarh States Roads Division.

54. I believe there will be room for some new roads.

55. I believe metal collection is an effective means of employing relief labour. But the metal cannot always be profitably used.

56. Not in this Division. But I believe it has in others.

57. Village tanks are generally not very large and cannot employ large bodies of labourers, but they are most suitable for the employment of small bodies of labourers because they afford them employment near their homes. They are also useful because they permanently improve and protect cultivated areas below them.

59. In this Division 21 tanks were constructed by relief-workers, by piece-work, and one by task-work. The last was the only one on which there was any undue rush of people. The piece-work system with infirm gangs and kitchen effectually stops people not in need of relief coming on the works.

60. No. Any number of tanks can yet be constructed in the distressed areas.

61. None in this Division. By impounding reservoirs, I understand that large reservoirs and not ordinary village tanks are intended.

62. Yes. They not only improve the land below them, but protect it when the rainfall fails.

63. I think a good many very large tanks might be constructed and some impounding reservoirs.

64, 65 and 66. I think a good many very large tanks might be constructed and some impounding reservoirs.

67. Many of the water-courses in the affected areas contain flowing streams up to the months of December and January. Some of these have low banks and rocky beds. These streams might be partially dammed, and their waters used for irrigation. I think several small schemes like this, which would protect large areas, might be worked out.

I am also of opinion that chains of small tanks connected by contour channels having waste channels at the top of spurs might be designed. These would afford a great deal of work while they would permanently improve large areas now unprotected.

70. As far as I know the Code practically has been observed, and plans and estimates for works have been kept in readiness.

71. About 10 miles of their own free will. Beyond this they have to be more or less persuaded to go.

72. Yes. In many cases people will not leave their homes to go further until forced by hunger to do so.

73. Not if they can be profitably employed nearer their houses. If they are conveyed long distances to large works, some effort should, I think, be made to protect their homes.

74. I should say the exception. All who could do so returned to their homes.

75. No. Those who remained on the works were, with a few exceptions, people who had left their homes and wandered to the works. They had no homes to return to.

76. I do not think it is necessary or desirable to make residence obligatory. If the tasks fixed can be enforced in the case of able-bodied workers there need be no fear of people coming on the works who do not need relief. Experience during the late famine showed that the piece-work system with infirm gangs and kitchens can effect this perfectly.

77. No. I think people will willingly reside on works if this is insisted on, but I do not think this restriction is necessary or desirable.

78. The late famine was widespread, and some difficulty was experienced in obtaining sufficient establishment; but on the whole, I think, the requirements were fairly met and the workers were allowed to return to their homes.

79. The works were generally near enough for workers to come to the works and return to their homes. No reduction was made in the tasks, but no fines for short work, below the minimum wage, were exacted.

80. I cannot give this as I have not got the information in camp.

81. No. They were better hutted, I consider, on the works under my charge than in their own houses.

82. Blankets and cloth were provided for the weakly ones in the kitchen and hospitals only.

83. I found them about the same on both large and small works.

84 to 113. I regret I cannot give the figures asked for in question No. 84 as I have not got the information in camp. I have dealt with all the other questions in detail in a separate note, and have added such further remarks as I consider necessary here.

89. No. I do not consider any limit necessary.

90. I think the workers should be allowed to form their own gangs for piece-work. When contractors were not employed I limited the gangs to a minimum of 10, but allowed as large combinations as the workers chose to make. I have in one case allowed batches of 5 to work together. I am of opinion that the best plan is to allow people of one village to group themselves together irrespective of their number. Where contractors were employed, I allowed no limit to the size of gangs. Single men were given work separately if necessary, and I experienced no difficulty. This is a great advantage in employing contractors.

91. I think that as a rule a ganger chosen by the workers distributes payments fairly, though I have had complaints of unfair distribution occasionally.

92. One charge can generally offer the relief of two with practically the same establishment, less the Gang Muharrirs on the piece-work sections, and a reduction of about 15 per cent. in the workers can be effected. But this 15 per cent. is actual reduction—that is, people who do not need relief and leave because they must do the task. But taking into account the reduction due to the prevention of the fraudulent addition to the numbers by the Gang Muharrirs, a reduction of about 30 per cent. is effected. On the other hand quite twice the amount of work is done for the same expenditure.

93. None whatever. They took kindly to piece-work when once they got used to it even after "task-work."

94 *to* 100. Have been dealt with in my statement.

101. I have found a whole charge on the minimum wage. The average condition of the workers was normal and not feeble.

102. Only by piece-work.

103. See my Statement.

104, 105 and 106. If the task-work system is retained in its present form it is very desirable that a measure for work to be done by carriers should I think be fixed. The condition of the workers, however, varies so much that I think it will be difficult to make one standard generally applicable as long as weak and strong workers are mixed together. I

have not been able to consider Mr. Higham's proposals carefully, and am not therefore prepared to give a definite opinion on them, but the formula seems practical, and I see no reason why it should not give approximately fair results.

107. The works establishment can be instructed to dispose labour so as to get the best results, but I find they have so much to do that they cannot find time to give the attention that is required to these questions.

108. I would fix the least unit at 25.

112. As I am unable to refer to figures I cannot give the proportion, but this varied very considerably.

113. The preponderance of women and children was in my opinion due to men, who did not need relief in the least, sending their families on to the works even if they did not come themselves. For instance, men in the Pendra Zamindari earning 3 annas a day for felling sleepers, and others carting sleepers, sent all their women and children on to the works because they had nothing else to do from January to June. I was informed that a body of men on the Bengal-Nagpur Railway at Drug who were getting annas 4 a day each on plate-laying, deserted the work and went with their families to the relief-works on the Drug-Dhamda Road, because, with their women and children drawing cash wages they could earn more. It was not in the least necessary for the State to support the wives and children in the above cases, and certainly not further than to offer them work on the terms of payment-by-results.

114. I think that all large public works, and any requiring any extent of professional knowledge, should be carried out by Public Works Officers.

115, 116, 117 and 118. With reference to relief-works entrusted to the Public Works Department, I am of opinion that as *it must be the duty* of the Civil Officers to see that sufficient relief is afforded to all the people who need relief within their charges, they should bear some of the responsibility for the efficiency of these relief-works. It is also very desirable that there should be some supreme local control, so that urgent questions may be promptly dealt with, and action taken without delay.

From my experience during the past famine, I am of opinion that there can be no doubt that the Commissioner of the Division is the proper Civil Officer to exercise the above local control, and the Local Civil Officer who should be held responsible to Government for the efficiency of relief-works under the Public Works Department.

The Superintending Engineer must, however, also be responsible to Government for the efficiency of the relief-works under the Public Works Department.

I am therefore of opinion that the Superintending Engineer and the Commissioner of the Division, acting in concert, should exercise joint control over relief-works entrusted to the Public Works Department, and they should be held equally responsible to Government for the efficiency of these relief-works.

[illegible] the above arrangements, uniformity in working will [illegible]nsured throughout a Division. The Executive Engineer [illegible] readily consult the Commissioner and take prompt [illegible]ion on his authority, in urgent cases, and a great deal of [illegible]respondence and delay will be saved by the question [illegible]g disposed of locally, which would otherwise have to be [illegible]red to the Superintending Engineer.

[illegible]ith reference to relief-works entrusted to the Public [illegible]rks Department, the Collector should I think be respon[illegible]ble to the Commissioner and, through him, to the Government for—

(*a*) Insisting on relief-works being opened where he considers they are necessary.

(*b*) Drafting people who are in need of relief from their villages to these works.

(*c*) Visiting these works himself or having them visited by his relief officers, and bringing to the notice of the Executive Engineer and Commissioner any cases which come under his observation, in which the orders of Government are not being carried out efficiently. Neither he nor his subordinates should issue any orders on the works.

(*d*) Seeing that works are closed when necessary, and assisting the Public Works Officers in performing the closing operations properly.

(*e*) Providing suitable men for the post of Officer-in-charge of the works.

(*f*) Arranging for the sale of grain on works.

The Executive Engineer should, I consider, be responsible to the Superintending Engineer and Commissioner of the Division, and through them to the Government, for all relief-works under his charge being organized strictly in accordance with the orders of Government, and for their general efficiency.

It should, I think, also be understood that the Executive Engineer and Collector, should act as colleagues in dealing with the various branches of relief in a district. Each rendering the other such assistance and advise as may from time to time be sought.

Beyond visiting works for the Collector and bringing any inefficiency to his notice, the Collector's Assistants should be allowed no authority over relief-works under the Public Works Department. There is absolutely no necessity for any control being delegated to the Collector's Assistants while it is liable to lead to inefficient working.

I think I may venture to state that, with one or two exceptions, the relief-works under my charge were managed, during the late famine, practically on the above lines; and where the exceptions occurred, inefficiency invariably resulted for a time, and had to be rectified.

I will quote one or two examples in support of my statements.

On one occasion I issued certain orders regarding the employment of the workers and the execution of work on a relief-work under my charge. As a precaution, I first sent the orders to the Collector, and asked him if he approved of them to send them on to the Sub-Divisional Officer for communication to the officer-in-charge. This the Collector did. Not long afterwards the Collector was visiting the work, and forgetting all about the orders he had himself approved of, issued entirely contrary orders. My orders were issued to give me a check on the staff and to secure efficient working. This did not suit the staff, and they got other orders from the Collector which they took care to keep me ignorant of for some weeks. The Collector, I may add, had not the least idea at the time that he was altering the orders he had previously and still approved of.

Again, the same work was visited by the Collector's Assistant, and orders were issued by the Assistant to the Officer-in-charge to increase the wages, which I was only authorized to do after the approval of the Commissioner of the Division. These changes in the scale of wages play into the hands of the staff till the workers get to know that the scale has been raised. I was kept in ignorance of this order for some time.

On the other hand, I only had 12 people drafted to this relief-work by the Civil authorities all the time it was in progress.

I think these examples show that it is extremely difficult for an Executive Engineer to organize and carry out relief-works efficiently if other officers are authorized to issue orders on works which he cannot know anything of for possibly weeks.

Where the Collector confined himself and his Assistants to bringing to my notice any irregularities he noticed, no difficulties occurred, and the results proved very satisfactory. The drafting of workers to these works was most effectively carried out by the Civil authorities. In opening one of these works personally, the day after I announced I was prepared to receive workers, batches came in from all directions with letters from patwaris to say that they were in need of relief and wanted employment.

118. Naib-Tahsildars, Revenue Inspectors, Native Officers of Native Regiments, provided they know English. I think all Officers-in-charge should be able to read and write English, otherwise they become tools in the hands of their subordinates.

119. Most certainly. Also Hospital Assistants.

120. Certainly they can and should. A kitchen on each work is very necessary.

121. I think the Officer-in-charge should have the same powers as a Tahsildar. The extent of the powers I cannot give an opinion on. But he certainly needs powers to enforce sanitary rules.

122. I do not think so.

123. No.

124. Daily, on both task and piece-work.

125. I would recommend the pice unit.

126. Either by independent Cashiers or by Work Agents not by Gang Muharrirs (See my statement).

Mr. G. M. Harriott.

127. No. People applying for work were admitted on application. I do not consider chalans desirable.

128. (i) They will not come to works if they can possibly help doing so.

(ii) Once they are induced to come, they appreciate the relief, and I think work better than the ordinary worker.

129. I think a charge cannot be properly managed if it exceeds 5,000 people. I think the minimum limit should be 2,000.

130. All children 12 years of age and under should be fed at the kitchen.

131. Nil.

132. Nil.

133. Only the one quoted by me in my answer to Question No. 113.

134. The above case was, I have every reason to believe, quite true. Doles at the kitchen to children of 12 years and under, and the piece-work system with infirm gangs and kitchen, will stop such complaints.

135. Yes. I was told the men were getting 4 annas a day each.

136. No. Four annas a day is practically R8 a month. My own servants were supporting their families on R6 and R7 a month. These were under my special observation and I can vouch for their comfort.

137. The piece-work system with infirm gangs and kitchen.

138. Not as far as I know.

139. Not as far as I know.

Mr. Anant Lal.

Written answers to the Commission's questions by MR. ANANT LAL, *Extra-Assistant Commissioner, Jabalpur.*

*2. The distress was due to successive failure of crops by rust and rains.

3(*b*). The prices of grain were three times higher than in ordinary years.

5. Yes. As a rule the labouring classes are in a precarious condition in all seasons.

6. Yes.

7. In most villages the village headman, that is, the malguzar, is the only man who keeps reserve stocks of grain, which is sufficient for only a year. He advances seed to tenants every year and takes it back at harvest with interest. The rest of the village community keep no reserve stock with rare exceptions.

16. In the month of August relief-workers were divided into three parts, as under :—

Part I.—Piece-workers.

Part II.—Task-workers.

Part III.—Infirms and dependants.

The piece-work system was introduced for the first time, which resulted in a sudden fall in the numbers on relief. The change had the desired effect of eliminating persons who were not really in need and who had useful employment in the fields.

19. On all Civil Officers' relief-works, except one, a reasonable amount of work was exacted. I have reason to believe that in the commencement this was not done on Public Works Department works, when able-bodied and weakly persons were not classed in a manner to ensure the exaction of proper tasks. On Civil Officers' relief-works the gangs were homogeneous, but this was not the case on Public Works Department works. This defect was subsequently corrected with the introduction of new classification of workers in three parts. (See answer to question 16.)

20. Yes.

21. The number of destitute persons to whom the test of labour could not be applied was very small.

22. Speaking generally, the conditions of the task and the wage were such as to constitute a stringent test of necessity. The task has been reasonable and the wage a bare subsistence wage. The scale of wage sanctioned by the district authority from time to time was in most cases a little below the wage scale due on the basis of price of grain. Cases have come to my notice that labourers could make savings even with this bare subsistence wage, but these persons were making savings at the sacrifice of their health.

23. There were ten relief-works all over the district in the fair weather and nine in the monsoons. About 25 per cent. of the workers resided on the works. Residence upon a relief-work is disliked by the people. I have seen people returning to their homes in the night at distances from 5 to 8 miles from relief-works and again attending works early next morning. The distance is undoubtedly an effective test of necessity, but it is doubtful whether it is a fair test.

24. The maximum pressure was reached in the month of July and the percentage of relief-workers to total population was 10.

26. I have no experience of any former famine, but the eagerness with which the people have resorted to relief-works is remarkable. I attribute this to the repeated and continuous failures of crops, which induced the people to lay by as much as they could for times of necessity.

27. Gratuitous relief was mainly given by means of money to persons in their homes.

28. The risk of a too free grant of home-relief was effectually prevented by constant checks by responsible officers, and the relief was confined to persons who were in real want and who belonged to the classes specified in the Code.

29. I look upon home-relief as the best measure of relief. It saves lives and keeps villages and household together. It has had no demoralising effect in this district. The person relieved by this means is looked upon by the people as a "kangir," a beggar, which has the good effect of checking well-to-do persons from accepting it. I make these remarks without any experience of any previous famine.

39. During the late famine, the following direct measures of State relief were adopted :—

Poor-house.	Village-relief.
Relief-centre.	Kitchen.
Relief-work.	

With the exception of relief from Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund and some help by local missionaries, no private charity worth mentioning was in operation.

Poor-House.

43. There were four poor-houses. One at the head-quarters of each tahsil and two in the interior of the district. The policy adopted was to have a poor-house in every place in the affected area where there was a dispensary. The Damoh Poor-house was, after its short existence under a local Committee, put in charge of a special Assistant dep[illegible] from the District Office, and had a special Hospital As[illegible] ant to supervise it. The remaining three poor-houses w[illegible] under the local Hospital Assistant, who managed the insti[illegible] tion with the help of Committees locally appointed for t[illegible] purpose. The arrangement of having poor-houses in [illegible] interior of the district at places where there are Governm[illegible] dispensaries has much to recommend it, but for its effic[illegible] management it is absolutely necessary that the num[illegible] should be within a controllable limit. I think that as soo[illegible] as the number reaches 50 in such poor-houses the new admissions should be stopped, the applicants being sent to the nearest poor-house at the head-quarters of the tahsil, where there ought to be a well-paid Superintendent and a special Medical Officer, with a sufficient subordinate establishment. The poor-house is intended mainly for sickly persons who cannot be relieved otherwise. The inmates therefore call for special consideration. I have seen scarcely any man in the poor-house whose admission was due to having refused to labour though fit for work. It is dif[illegible] to induce professional beggars to go to the poor-house, and any compulsion in the matter hurts the religious susceptibility of the masses.

The rules for the management of poor-houses reprinted in Appendix IV of the Code have been followed in their essence.

Instead of storekeepers and overseers, one or two moharrirs were employed to carry on the work. It was difficult to get overseers efficient to discharge the duties assigned to them in the Famine Code on payment in food and a nominal

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

wage of R1 a month. With the exception of warders and nurses all the establishment was paid in *cash* and not in food. The cash payment is the best way of paying servants, and it enables the cooking of food to be done with as little prejudice to caste rules as possible. It is to be remembered that the inmates of the poor-house will necessarily be sickly and weakly people, and that cooking and carrying of water are kinds of work that require a healthy physique. The ration scale prescribed in Rule 82 of the Famine Code has varied on the suggestion of the Medical Officer-in-charge. I don't think the scale quite answers the purpose, and I recommend that the scale recently prescribed by the Jail Commission for infirm gangs should be adopted for poor-houses.

I have noticed that Police guards were employed in poor-houses to check ingress or egress. This was work which could have been done by ordinary peons.

Relief-Centres.

A few relief-centres were kept open temporarily in the earliest stages of famine-relief operations, but were closed as soon as the village-relief measures were fully introduced. Cooked food was given to necessitous applicants who were after a short stay forwarded to the nearest relief-work or brought on village-relief. Relief-centres were managed by local Committees appointed for the purpose. This measure of relief is identical to all intents and purposes with kitchens and calls for no remarks.

Relief-Works.

Sections 51 and 60.—The rates were adjusted by the District authority and not by the officer-in-charge. This arrangement is preferable to the Code rule.

Section 52.—This classification had to be altered, the workers being divided into two classes:—

(*a*) Able-bodied persons.

(*b*) Persons not able-bodied, but fit for light employment.

Persons of class (*a*) were put on piece-work, and of (*b*) on task-work.

This classification was effected at a time when there was great demand for private labour, and has much to recommend it. It does not, however, seem to me suited for purposes of famine-relief. I think that it is economical in the long run to employ only such persons on relief-works as can do a fixed amount of task, the rest being relieved gratuitously in the kitchen.

Sections 63 and 64.—All task-workers should be paid daily. Payments at longer intervals cause great inconvenience to the labourers.

Section 77.—It is impossible to arrange for nurses for babies, and parents have objections to leaving children with other persons.

Women with children in arms or with children in a sick condition, should receive special consideration.

Infirm persons, if not dependants, should not be drafted to the poor-house, unless they have a home, in which case they may be brought on village-relief.

Village-Relief.

Section 37.—I don't think the dole in money given was sufficient to buy the minimum ration, but it was sufficient to save the lives of the people.

A rule was introduced under which a maximum of R5 per month was fixed for a family on village-relief. I think no such maximum should be fixed.

Section 25 (c).—The Circle Inspector and other officers who had power to check registers were required to *forward daily* abstracts to the Charge Officer.

Detailed rules of account of village-relief money should, I think, be embodied in the Code.

Kitchen.

The arrangements made were very simple. Cooked food in the form of *khichri* was distributed to children in need and living within a radius of 3 miles. The kitchen was placed in charge of the local Police Officer or schoolmaster. At first kitchens were not popular, but gradually people began to appreciate the advantages.

Other measures.

Section 101.—Relief to respectable women.

In a few cases relief was given to respectable women not entitled to relief, but it was impossible to get any work out of them. I think the rule should be altered so as to authorize such relief, when no suitable work can be found.

107. Orphan children were sent to the Orphanage at the Head-quarters from time to time and not on the closing of the poor-house. I don't think much good has been done by this procedure.

40. I was exclusively placed on famine duty from the very commencement of relief operations, and had to organize, inspect, and report on each measure of relief.

41. They are all Code measures.

42. No; all Code measures were used and proved successful.

48. The home-relief measure was most approved by all classes of people.

49. I think when a famine is imminent, kitchens should be opened first of all in suitable localities. It should be gradually followed by small relief-works like village tanks and field embankments, and this should be followed by village-relief and, lastly, large works. If works are started in a hurry, a great waste of money is the result.

I venture to think that the Famine Code should be re-cast in the light of the experience gained.

In each district detailed instructions were drawn up which must have cost great labour and they should be incorporated in the Code.

53. I don't think that the roads constructed as relief-works will be of permanent service to the community, as they are all unmetalled and unfinished. In most cases the roads follow the old tracks, and there is no fear of their being abandoned.

57. Village tanks are one of the best forms of relief-work. The usefulness of a tank depends a great deal upon its catchment area. Tanks are very useful to the village community for domestic purposes for watering village cattle, and, if their position allows, for irrigating fields. This is one of the kinds of work on which the piece-work system can be successfully introduced.

59. The tanks constructed as famine-works were mostly large ones. They could provide daily for 1,000 men in a satisfactory way. Payment by results through mukaddam will, to a great extent, prevent unnecessary demand for labour.

60. No. There are a good many suitable localities for tank-works in stock.

62 and 63. Yes.

67. Yes. The Mohra tank in the Tejgarh Circle.

70. No plans and estimates were ready. This defect has in most cases resulted in waste of money.

71 (*a*). Five miles.

(*b*). Twelve miles.

72. Yes.

73. It is difficult for the present to induce people to go to distances from their homes. They would rather starve at their homes than go a distance, but their imaginary fear is gradually dying out, and it may be possible with the progress of time to induce them to go a distance in batches with promises of good accommodation and remuneration. This is possible only in cases of greatest necessity.

74. The exception.

76. It is so difficult to provide proper accommodation and comfort for labourers in camp that I am not in favour of residence being made obligatory. I have noticed that the number of workers is the largest from the village where this relief-work is situated. This is because the work is at their doors. As soon as the camp is moved a large number disappear. It would appear that distance has much to do in attracting people to works. I am, however, of opinion that a high task and low rate of wage are in themselves sufficient tests.

77. No. The labourers live gladly in camp if arrangements for their accommodation are adequate. They find it economical and safe to live in their homes, and return every night even at long distances at the risk of physical inconvenience.

77. The objection is not confined to any particular class.

79. No.

Mr. Anant Lal.

81. Not to any appreciable extent except in the rains, when exposure caused dysentery and other diseases.

85. Piece-work is not suitable in all cases. This system was not given a full trial in this district; the labourers having left the works immediately after the enforcement of the system.

86. I consider it suitable in small works such as field embankments in villages. I would recommend that a contract should be made with the mukaddam of the village to do a fixed quantity of work at a certain cost, and payments be made on the completion of that work. This will enable the mukaddam to relieve the people of his village and, at the same time, improve the agricultural prospects of his village. Piece-work proves a failure when gangs are formed of labourers of different villages and specially of villages far distant from each other.

88. When the contract is made with the mukaddam of the village on behalf of the village community, he will be made responsible that the earning is divided equally between all his workers except those that are fit subjects of other forms of gratuitous relief.

97. The failure to perform a reasonable task must entail short payments to the whole gang to the extent of one-quarter of the wage. In order to prevent the abuse of this power, it should be made compulsory on the officer-in-charge to report the infliction of fine to his immediate superior from day to day.

101. Yes. No. It has not resulted in enfeebled health.

103. The village labourers are not accustomed to rest days. I am in favour of paying a wage on Sunday. It would suffice if tasks for Sundays be fixed at half the ordinary task.

113. The preponderance of women and children is, I think, caused by the opening of field-works for which men are more in demand than women and children. It is not that adult males find private employment at wages in excess of the famine wage, but that the famine-work being of only a temporary nature, they cannot afford to neglect the work on which their future maintenance depends. If task rules are rigorously enforced, the preponderance of women will disappear.

113 A. A great deal depends upon the nature, extent and locality of works.

113 B. Yes.

118. The present system of appointing Naib-Tahsildars as officers-in charge is a good one. It is desirable that in filling vacancies preference should be given to young men of good education and respectable families.

119. I think the officer-in-charge should be placed under the direct orders of the officers of the Public Works Department.

120. Yes.

121. I don't think this necessary nor desirable.

127. No. I don't consider it a desirable practice. The admission should be left to the discretion of the officer-in-charge, and, as a rule, all applicants for labour should be admitted unless there is reason to believe that the applicant is also in receipt of some other form of relief, in which case a challan from patwari or mukaddam is necessary to prevent double relief.

128. There has been no difficulty in inducing the members of aboriginal hill tribes to attend the works at a reasonable distance from their homes, and when on works they worked steadily, faithfully carried out their tasks, and were very amenable to discipline.

129. Forty is the maximum and thirty the minimum number that should form a single gang.

130. I am in favour of kitchens in all cases in which relief is given to non-working children. I think gratuitous cash payment should be confined to children in arms.

Suggestions.

I think when famine-works are under direct control of Department Public Works, the District authority should be given a sufficient number of hands whose duty should be to make constant inspection of works under the orders of the District authority. Nothing is so useful in checking frauds in works as surprise inspections at odd intervals. The duty of these officers should be confined to the verification of gangs and checking muster-rolls and accounts. The officers so appointed should be not below the rank of Tahsildars, and I have reason to believe that the money spent in this way will be money well spent.

Similarly, works under Civil officers should be subjected to inspection by persons unconnected with the works.

148. Six per cent. of the affected area was placed on gratuitous relief at the period of maximum pressure.

149. Yes. They mostly belonged to labouring classes dependant on agriculture.

150. Yes, with rare exceptions who were excluded subsequently.

151. In ordinary years, they, if in good health, earn their own living, and, if cripples or otherwise disabled from earning, are supported by private charity.

152. Yes. A very small number of women belonged to the *pardanashin* class. I think it was hardly 2 per cent. of the total relieved.

153. The numbers will vary with the severity and stage of the distress. No reliable estimate can be formed of the persons requiring home-relief.

154. It may be presumed that no great amount of gratuitous relief is required, but the presumption will not be always correct. The prevalence of guinea-worm, ulcers and other diseases is likely to prevent people in large numbers from attending the relief-works, and still the necessity for gratuitous relief be great.

155. I don't approve of the practice. Relief should be administered on individual merits.

156. Yes. I see no use in forcing the incapable person to accompany his relatives to relief-works.

157. Already answered.

159. No.

160. Yes. Specially among low castes.

161. No.

162. Yes; but it is scarcely worth while employing them. The daily wage is far in excess of the home village dole paid in this district. The outturn of work would not be equal to the excess amount paid in consequence of their being employed on light work.

164. In the early stages of distress, and when the distress is on the wane, central kitchens are preferable to home-relief. In view of caste prejudices, they will form a good test of necessity.

165. Caste prejudices are so strong that not only men of good castes, but of lowest castes, object to taking cooked food. A person thus relieved has the fear of excommunication. The substitution of kitchens for gratuitous relief in form of grain or money doles would undoubtedly exclude on account of these sentiments certain classes from relief who really need it. I have seen numerous cases of destitutes declining to take cooked food at the risk of their lives.

166. Yes.

167. In form of money, which is preferable to the form of grain, unless grain is not procurable in the local market.

168. In the actual homes of the people.

169. The cases of extension were extremely few. They were checked by timely precautions. I don't know of any instances in which relief was purchased.

170. The existing organization was fully utilized. A few extra patwaris and Revenue Inspectors had to be entertained and a Charge Officer of superior grade was appointed for each charge for effectual supervision of the subordinate staff. The services of schoolmasters were also utilized for kitchens.

171. The Christian Missionaries in the station had the immediate charge of Government Orphanage; with this exception no unofficial agency could be utilized in administering gratuitous relief. Private bodies sat as local Committees appointed to manage poor-houses, but they were always aided by Government agency.

172. The poor-house population reached the climax in July when the pressure was at its maximum.

173. The inmates were drawn chiefly from the lowest class.

174. Yes. It is doubtful if any degree of pressure would have induced them to go there. It is the fear of excommunication and residence that keeps them back from going to the poor-house. Each class has a head, and when that man takes the lead the rest will follow him. I know of a case in which a Chamar girl had been excommunicated for having partaken food in the kitchen. Her caste men refused to take water of her hand. She was very sorry for this.

I sent for the headman and asked him the reason of excommunication. His verdict was that, as the food was cooked by a Brahman, no harm was done. The girl pleaded that these declarations were not sincere. I made the man drink water of the girl's hand, and all obstacles were removed. The men in better classes might be induced to go to the poor-house when the distress is most acute and they are utterly helpless.

176. The mortality was very high throughout the period, but was highest in August. The high mortality is due to inmates having been admitted in a condition past recovery.

177. The number of inmates who wandered from Native States was very large. It amounted to something over 20 per cent. of the total population.

179. Yes; systematically done.

180. I have already answered this in paragraph 39.

The dietary had to be varied in the case of weakly and sickly persons.

181. (See paragraph 39.)

182. I think not. The compulsion in this direction was very seldom found necessary.

183. Yes. The outturn was equal to work done in jails by infirm gangs. The success was most marked at Pathariya, Hatta, and Jabera. At first the inmates expressed obstinate refusal to work, but inducement of extra diet at once had a beneficial effect. Rope-making, spinning and weaving were the forms of work done.

184. The inmates were not free to leave when they chose. The departures and escapes were numerous. In the Hatta poor-house, whose figures I have got, the escapes amounted to 9 per cent. of the total admissions. Compulsion had to be used to detain persons in the poor-houses.

194. Relief kitchens are required on relief-works for children and dependants as well as elsewhere for relief generally of the incapable poor.

196. Cooked food was given to all applicants in real need of relief.

197. No; there was no waste or misapplication of food. Food was cooked on the basis of attendance on the previous day. Any balance left was distributed to the children a second time. The kitchens were ordinarily under the charge of officials, officers-in-charge of Police outposts or station-houses and schoolmasters.

198. It is preferable to relieve children and other dependants on relief-works by means of cooked food. The parents to whom money was given for this object could not be trusted to expend it on their children. On a relief-work where cooked food was not distributed, but relief given in money, children preferred going to a poor-house to remaining with their parents. A boy gave out that he had no parents, and when he was about to be despatched to the poor-house, his mother turned up to claim him. The boy flatly said that the mother did not feed him. The mother shed tears, but the child declined to get out of the cart in which it was arranged to convey him.

199. The following State advances were made:—

Rupees 65,000 for land improvements.

Rupees 2,25,000 for seed-grain.

No advance was made for subsistence.

200. A portion of the advances for land improvements, about 20 per cent. of the total loan, was misapplied and diverted to purchase of seed-grain, etc.

201. Yes.

202. Three years in each case, beginning with 1st June 1898.

203. No.

Mr. Anant Lal.

204. Cultivators require subsistence advances, not only for themselves, but also for the labourers. I approve of the principle of subsistence advances to landowners.

205. It is more economical to aid by such advances to land-holding classes.

206. No. Only such would borrow as have credit left, Cultivators as a class hesitate to take Government loans, and would not borrow unless pressed by unavoidable necessity.

220. The number of such orphan children would not be large. Attempts should be made, in the first instance, to make them over to any private charitable institution, and, when this is not practicable, the orphans should be brought up under the care of the State, and trained in some craft till they came of age. If the number at any time is large, the orphans should be settled down in some colony or ryotwari tract in the Province.

221. Yes; if private orphanages are not self-supporting and their managers apply for aid, the aid should take the form of a contribution towards the expenses.

231. Only such agriculturists should be helped as have lost all their credit and are known by the village community to be steady, industrious, and thrifty.

232. No.

233. Yes; provided the agriculturist is otherwise a fit subject for help.

234. Yes; without help from the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund about one-third of the cultivated area would have remained unsown, and many lives would have been lost for want of warm clothing by exposure to cold.

235. The bulk of the money received was used on the following objects:—

	R
Seed-grain . . .	2,25,000
Blankets . . .	10,000

242. All officers-in-charge of Police station-houses and outposts were provided with funds to relieve the starving wanderers. Besides all touring officers employed on relief had funds to help such wanderers. The number was large enough to attract attention. They were most numerous on the road leading to Jabalpur. In the vain hope of getting better wages at another place the people wandered in batches from one place to another. In the town of Damoh all wanderers were collected daily in the serais, whence, under the supervision of a responsible officer, they were sent on various reliefs to which they were qualified.

243. I think no amount of works or extension of village-relief would have stopped this wandering. The only way of stopping it is by compelling the people to return to the works or relief-centres nearest to their houses and explaining to them that they have no better prospects anywhere else.

244. Yes.

245. The wanderers were most numerous from Native States, and they were attracted to my district as reliefs were not open to them near their homes.

246. No.

247. The emigrants should be stopped from entering into the district, and none should be employed on relief-work unless he proves himself to be a permanent resident of the district. He should be required to produce a note from the mukaddam of the village where he resides, or should be identified by the village kotwar. Unless some such step is taken it becomes difficult to close relief operations in time, and not unfrequently a false impression is formed of the state of the district. The wanderers seldom give out their correct names and place of residence, and about 50 per cent. of them state that they are residents of the district when they are not. Many difficulties would be avoided if emigrants are stopped from entering British territories. Arrangements should be made with the Political Agents on the subject.

Written statement of evidence by MR. M. LESLIE, *Executive Engineer, Saugor.*

Mr. M. Leslie.

(A)—Departures from Principles of Famine Relief Code.

The principles of the Central Provinces Famine Code appear to have been so closely followed, that I have no remarks to make in the matter of principles which have been departed from as, if made at all, these departures have been few and far between.

(B)—Success of Operations.

As regards degree of success which has attended the measures adopted:—

(i) In the matter of saving life, measures adopted seem to have been absolutely successful.

I am more especially able to state this with regard to the Saugor District, but I have no reason to suppose that in

Mr. M. Leslie.

this respect measures in the Damoh District were less successful. A glance at the map shewing Public Works Department Famine Relief-Works dotted over the roads in both districts, will shew a fairly wide range of observation. From the beginning of February to the end of September during tours and inspections in all directions, I have only met with one corpse, and this was near the borders of a Native State.

(*i*) As regards economy, I consider such operations as came under my supervision unsuccessful under this head owing in the main to the fact that the officers-in-charge were chosen from the wrong class; that their remuneration was far too low and their duties too heavy. And to a less degree to the fact that no adequate professional supervision of work itself was possible owing to all sources from which such supervision is usually drawn in the Public Works Department being completely exhausted.

(*C*)—*Suggestions for future Operations.*

These have to some extent been dealt with at the consultation of officers engaged in these famine relief operations held by the Commissioner of Jabalpur on 25th January 1898, and the results of this Conference are on record.

The following seems to me the most important suggestion for future operations, and as such, and bearing on large works handed over to Public Works authorities, is brought forward separately.

This is the matter of officers-in-charge and the source from which they are to be appointed. (Question 118.)

The duties of an officer-in-charge, *i.e.*, of the superintending officer, who resides at each Famine Charge, are described in paragraph 51 of the Famine Relief Code. No special rule as to the class from which these officers are to be drawn is laid down.

In this Province the rules for appointing these officers are contained in General Order No. C.-498, paragraph 9.

Under these rules it will be observed that an officer-in-charge is a naib-tahsildar or officer of that class, and it will be seen that he is entitled only to the pay of ₹60 a month without horse allowance.

Compared with the necessity of revising this rule, all other proposals for or modifications of existing rules seem to me to sink into insignificance.

It is in fact at the root of all difficulties with which, speaking from my own experience, I have had to contend. An officer-in-charge, as will be seen from the nature of his duties described in paragraph 51 of the Famine Code, is responsible for the whole of the working of the camp under his charge, and for the carrying out of the rules as applicable to Famine Relief-Works. Under item 5 he is also responsible for the payments. It is consequently necessary that he should have a practically unlimited drawing account. This has consequently been given him in each case, and we thus have (even had it been possible to follow out the provisions of the Famine Code, and if the supply of officials of similar standing to a naib-tahsildar did not fall short) men whose substantive pay is ₹50 a month put in charge in inaccessible places of unlimited cash. This seems to me to be courting disaster. In the Jabalpur Conference above quoted, the sum suggested as salary for officers-in-charge was put at ₹150. This, however, seems to me far too low, and in times of acute famine and far-reaching distress, and when efficient petty staff is quite unattainable as at present, I should recommend from ₹200 to ₹500 for the officer-in-charge for each Famine camp. This would at once secure intelligent relief of distress; it would prevent peculation on anything like a large scale, and would consequently secure economy. Fewer inspecting officers would be necessary, and their duties would be less heavy or impossible in remote and inaccessible districts. Confusing, contradictory, and inaccurate inspection reports would be avoided, and action could be taken on the spot, where considered necessary, by the resident authority, instead of orders being awaited from a distance on a report received too late to make action of any avail.

Until the supply is exhausted, it seems that these posts should be given to gazetted officers and for choice to Englishmen as long as the supply holds out. There are of course native gentlemen who could do equally well as a matter of fact, but I have reason to suppose that those managed by the former would be the works to which the classes to be relieved would apply for relief most readily.

If the charges were close, *i.e.*, within 5 miles of each other, an officer, as above, might have charge of two. Otherwise it would be an economy to have one officer for each charge.

Taking a charge of even 4,000 men the expenditure on wages alone here would be ₹8,000 per month. Taking ₹350 as the pay of officer-in-charge, the percentage would be not quite 4½ per cent. on the wages paid.

The average cost of work carried out in my districts varied between three and five times the usual cost of such work. With intelligence and honest (not professional) supervision experience leads me to believe that even under unfavourable circumstances the cost would not exceed twice the usual cost.

Under favourable condition, *i.e.*, with professional supervision and not too weakly labourers, the cost of work would, I believe, not exceed the usual contract price paid.

When officers of the standing described are no longer available, it would, it seems, then be time to consider the question of purely gratuitous relief.

In reply to question 118, then gazetted officers suggests itself as a reply.

To summarize, though this is a matter requiring further consideration, it seems that the following are the sources from which officers-in-charge of relief-works should be taken, excluding the Public Works Department:—

(*i*) Junior officers of all departments, Civil and Military.

(*ii*) Royal Engineer Officers.

(*iii*) Staff Corps Officers.

(*iv*) Passed students of Engineering Colleges. (Assistant or Apprentice Engineer.)

(*v*) Candidates for Government appointment as gazetted officers.

(*D*)—*Other recommendations and opinions.*

*23. The dislike to residence on a famine relief-work was very marked, and I am unable to account for it.

71. The greatest distance to which distressed people would voluntarily come in these districts seemed to be about 6 miles, however ample might be the accommodation afforded. But it seems to me possible that were a few large works opened under similar circumstances and known to be under efficient supervision by resident English officers, the famine-stricken would come to these from considerable distances.

73. I have not seen it tried, nor am I in favour of the method described in this paragraph.

74—77. Voluntarily, residence on works has been quite the exception, those in want seem to prefer to starve at home.

No reductions in their tasks were made for distance from camps of workers as we wished them to live on the work.

81. Cold and discomfort ensued where workers did not reside on the work. Blankets were supplied to hospital.

Task-work and Piece-work.

84. This subject has been gone into very exhaustively already in Mr. Higham's note. I have tried both systems myself, and in the main my experience goes to confirm the accuracy of what has been therein stated and the views taken.

My experiences have been of acute famine and the close of a famine. Taking all the evidence it seems to me that piece-work is the system best adapted to the period before acute famine, task-work when that stage has been reached, and piece-work towards the close of famine operations when the condition of the people has improved. Piece-work seems best calculated to test the necessity for or bring to a close famine relief, while task-work, accompanied by carefully organized weak gangs, seems best calculated to relieve famine in its acute stage.

It seems to me that no hard-and-fast rule can be laid down, and that difficulties under either systems would be

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

easily dealt with by a superior class of officer-in-charge. The necessity for the latter having been dealt with elsewhere in my reply to question 118.

It must be remembered that a famine coolie becomes a practised and skillful loafer; he will do no task if he can help it; under task-work he has so many means of escape from his task under the necessarily complicated system described by Mr. Higham in paragraph 23 of his note, that he will remain on this in preference to piece-work. As a rule, he does not wish to become able-bodied or to earn money, or to support his dependents. He wishes to remain on relief and to shirk all work under whatever system.

When it was found that gangs were all fat and well-to-do, and laughing at their tasks and task-masters, they were put on to piece-work, when this state of things ceased.

They generally then proceeded to their homes, and only such as were in real need of relief returned.

All my famine works were closed on this principle. I think the objections to piece-work are somewhat overstated in paragraph 133 referred to, and against task-work somewhat understated as I have endeavoured to make clear above.

88. To prevent suffering weak gangs seem to me indispensable.

89. There seems to be no objection to a limit of earnings; the maximum being sufficient to procure the minimum ration of food required.

90. Probably 10 to 20 per cent. reduction of actual establishment; but this bears no relation to the savings by reducing opportunities for fraud.

94. There should be two classes—

(*i*) Able-bodied labourers (B).

(*ii*) Weakly, but fit for light employment (D).

Class (C) in the Famine Code soon became (B), and (B) and (C) both soon became (A); so that (A), (B), and (C) became one class for all such work as earthwork, carrying, and stone-breaking.

95. As at present calculated.

96. Depends on local circumstances.

97. I would judge by their size, not by their age, as an officer-in-charge would decide.

99. By non-payment of wages.

100. Paragraphs 61 and 62 of Famine Code seem to me to meet all cases.

101. Almost all in daily wage.

102. I am opposed to this.

103. Any regulation about Sunday seems out of place. Bazar-day to the poor class of natives is our Sunday. This question cannot be decided by local circumstances.

112. I have seen gangs of 4,000 women and children alone, the males being harvesting.

Civil and Public Works Officers in connection with Relief Works.

114. Major works requiring professional knowledge might be carried out by the Public Works Department; all minor works by Civil authorities.

116. Collector would be responsible far deciding the locality where works were to be started and for fixing the prices of grain on which wages were calculated.

I have also thought it advisable to take the Collector's (*i.e.*, Deputy Commissioner's) views where obtainable as to the condition of the people, and to temper fines for short work by his advice. The Executive Engineer would be responsible for all other matters in his works.

117. This depends entirely on who his Assistants are.

118. Answered at length under heading B.

120. I do not think the Public Works officers should be responsible for supplies of grain or medicines; all other matters the officer-in-charge must be responsible for.

121. This depends entirely on what class the officers-in-charge are taken from.

122 and 123. No.

Other Details.

129. I consider 1,000 to 4,000 the limit, but it depends upon who are officers-in-charge.

130. I am in favour of kitchens and no cash doles, except to nursing mothers.

Interference with Private Employers.

133, 134 and 135. Yes; I consider the earthwork on the Saugor-Katni line was interfered with between Saugor and Damoh in the Damoh district.

This was brought prominently to my notice after the rains by the Engineers-in-charge. I have travelled up and down the line in course of construction, and there is no sort of doubt in the matter, as I have verified by consulting the inspecting officers and subordinates on the line.

Inquiry shewed me that the coolies would sooner take 1½ annas on famine relief-works with the prospect of doing little or nothing than twice that amount from the contractors.

The way to meet this complaint was by insisting on piece-work for all able-bodied.

136. No; rates were very high, twice what we were paying.

137. Insist on piece-work at low rates for able-bodied.

139. Private employers, except for benevolent purposes would only take able-bodied workers.

Wanderers.

242. The numbers on my relief-works were constantly being increased by starving wanderers from the Native States arriving in Saugor and Damoh, *viz.*, Bhopal, Bundelkhund, Pannah, etc.; their presence was due no doubt to there being no famine-relief in their own States. Similarly, many wanderers from the North-Western Provinces came into the north of the Saugor District attracted by the careful arrangements for relief and stringent precautions against the coolies being robbed.

Mortality.

253. Some mortality under this head was incurred by the coolies buying unwholesome food (such as oil-cake) which was cheaper than wholesome food. They thus were enabled to follow out their main principle of shirking work without leaving their stomachs empty in consequence. They were also in some cases able to save by this means instead of by work.

258. The supply under this head was very short. The Military Medical subordinates transferred to famine-works under me were, in my opinion, subject to great hardship and temptation by the order that their pay was to be disbursed only through the Military authorities. These latter were beyond reach even of communication and men would have been left penniless for months had such orders been strictly carried out.

Written answers to the Commission's questions by MR. E. A. LUGARD, *Executive Engineer, Bhandara Division.* *Mr. E. A. Lugard.*

*1. From January to June 1897 I had charge of the Plateau Division consisting of the three districts of Chhindwara, Seoni and Balaghat. In June the Bhandara Division was formed consisting of the districts of Bhandara and Balaghat. In these notes I shall confine myself to the latter two districts only, bearing in mind this previous experience, as my chief experience has been in Balaghat where the acute distress caused me to be constantly present on tour.

Area of Balaghat 3,226 square miles.
Area of Bhandara 4,218 square miles.

In Balaghat distress was spread throughout the district. the population consisting of 383,331.

In Bhandara distress was spread through the district with the exception of the south-west part, but was more acute along the Balaghat border than elsewhere in the district.

Here the population is 742,850.

2. Distress in Balaghat was due to continued failure of crops for the last three years, and in Bhandara to the failure

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

Mr. E. A. Lugard.

of this last year's crops and the abnormal high prices of grain.

8. Price of rice, the common food, rose in Balaghat to 7 seers per rupee, and in Behir Tahsili, Balaghat, up to 5½ seers from a normal of 22 to 25 seers. In the 1877 famine prices did not rise so high, as there was not much actual famine in these districts; the prices rose then because of the great export due to demand from Madras and Bombay.

6. The highlands of Balaghat, Tahsili Behir, have been much in need of tanks. There was an instance in 1896 of a malguzar in Bareli village, 4 miles from Behir, who did not lose his crops to the same extent as in surrounding villages owing to his having a good tank.

7. They have generally reserves except the Mahara (weaver) and Gond classes and the hill tribes of Behir.

9. Under-estimated at first, necessitating easier tasks and more lenient treatment of the people on relief at the earlier period of the relief-works.

10. In Balaghat maximum number on relief at any one time, 12th June 1897, was 61,984: population in 1891 was 383,331: this gives 16 per cent., but there were many not in actual need on the works, and population may have increased. I think a maximum of 12 per cent. more nearly represents the proportion on the works. In Bhandara maximum at the same time 28,255: population in 1891 was 742,850, giving a percentage of 4 nearly.

12. Very many were at first relieved who were not in actual need. It was impossible to avoid this while task-work only was in force on the works, and the numbers on relief were large, as the relief-workers got steady pay for a minimum of work. See remarks on piece-work below.

13. No; relief measures were most thorough and widespread, all in need could obtain it at works not very far in any case from their homes.

15. Relief has been most successful. The Bhandara District has well recovered and Balaghat has much improved. In Bhandara relief was timely and well managed. In Balaghat there should have been relief-work in 1896. I refer only to Public Works Department works. Relief-work was started most advantageously in Seoni District in June 1896 and was a good measure of relief. A special arrangement was made with a contractor by which he agreed to take all people, weak and strong, applying for work, and in return he received slightly better rates. Similar relief-works in Balaghat would have avoided the low state in which many of the relief-workers came on to the works.

16. Yes; the introduction of the piece-work under contractor and piece-work of payment-by-results. There was an immediate large decrease on both occasions. It was a beneficial change as it removed those not in actual need, and did not deter those in real need from continuing at work, nor keep back the new comers.

18, 19 and 20. Yes; all persons were expected to do a suitable task. Women and children were duly included.

22. Task set was a full one in every case. Wage has been more than a bare subsistence; people have saved small sums and come into the towns on close of the works and purchased materials for weaving, etc.

23. There have been 7 large relief-camps in Bhandara and 12 in Balaghat (counting the various tanks in Behir as one large work). The people have not shown any objection to residing at the camps when in actual need of work, although naturally preferring their own homes, if not more than 4 miles away. I think it a good test of necessity, in that those not in actual need will not leave their own villages to reside elsewhere.

24. In Balaghat, on 12th June 1897, maximum on work excluding dependents was 56,467, giving percentage of 15. In Bhandara, on 12th June 1897, maximum 25,806, giving percentage on whole population of 3½.

27. On the large relief-works in the form of cooked food in kitchens only, when residence was not compulsory, but poor-houses were not maintained on the works. These kitchens were for the children, but adults were admitted temporarily and drafted on to the nearest poorhouse, or on to the works, if strong enough.

30. Gross cost Balaghat R10,90,214, Bhandara R8,49,718.; total number of workers 15,022,248 from 1st December 1896 to 31st December 1897 or 13 months or 390 days $= \frac{15,022,248}{390} = 38,518$ per day average. Cost of relief per unit, Bhandara R0-2-3, Balaghat R0-2-0. The percentage of establishment, hutting, medical, and tools and plant for Bhandara was 13·06, and for Balaghat 14·07. This compares favourably with the usual Local allowance for works of 11½ per cent., and for Imperial works of 24½ per cent.

39. (*a*) *Task work.*—In this a definite task is set for each gang calculated by the number of men, women and children in the gang. Daily wage is given whether the task is completed or not, but fines are inflicted with discretion for short work, down to a fixed minimum. The great drawback to this is that the people are quite content to get this minimum wage with easy work and prefer it to (*b*) and (*c*). Also each member of the gang is paid and each member of a man's family gets a daily wage. In a family of five members they are well off on the minimum wage.

(*b*) *Piece-work under contractors*—In piece-work under contractors the people work as in ordinary contract work, but the contractor is bound to pay them a certain proportion of the money he receives for the work, and has also to admit all that are drafted to him for work. As a return for this and for his supervision and labour he receives a percentage above the normal rates.

(*c*) *Piece-work, payment-by-results.*—In payment-by results the people are put on to piece-work under the direct management of the camp officials, without the intervention of the contractor, and are paid according to the actual work they do as in ordinary piece-work. In this particular instance orders were received for payments to be made every third day.

See general report below and questions 22, 23 and 51.

40. I have had to carry out all three on the works in my charge.

41. The two methods of piece-work were not Code measures.

42. Task-work was used throughout, the piece-work being carried on with the task-work.

44 (A) (*a*).—In all cases of acute distress where the large majority are weak, task-work is most suitable. But this task-work is very demoralizing, the people become lazy and make a mere pretence of work as long as they feel sure of receiving at least the minimum wage.

(B) (*a*).—It is also most wasteful, as there is a much larger expenditure in proportion to the work done.

(A) (*b*).—In piece-work under contractors the people are made to work heartily. The contractor is personally interested in their doing so, and is constantly on the watch and present supervising the work.

(B) (*b*).—It is economical because the work done is of better quality and of very much larger quantity for the same expenditure.

(A) (*c*).—This is excellent in theory, but fails in practice. The Officer-in-charge is usually a man who knows very little about work, and he and the work agents are men paid monthly, and not interested in the people doing work heartily. They much prefer to get back to their quarters to standing over the people as the contractor does. On checking I have found the people on this system being paid for the full task, but the work agents when asked quite unable to show what the full task really was. I am convinced that, except when an inspecting officer is near, they do not take the trouble to mark out and calculate accurately the work of each gang.

(B) (*c*).—There is a saving of the percentage paid to the contractor, but more agents are required and the quantity of the work is not so good as in (*b*).

45 and 46. I strongly recommend a system of piece-work under petty contractors with task work annexe. In this piece-work system the rates must first be calculated by the capacity of a man, woman or child for proper work. I circulated the attached list to show the rates to be paid in this Division; they were thus calculated:—

Take gitti-breaking white quartz.

Good task for a man is 6 c. ft. in 1 day.

„ „ „ woman is 4½ c. ft. „

Minimum wage when grain is at 8 seers is for a man R0-1-9, for a woman R0-1-6. } Central Provinces General Order No. C.-498, Ready Reckoner.

20 men will do in one day 120 c. ft. and receive R2-3-0.

40 women will do in one day 180 c. ft. and receive R3-12-0.

or a total of R5-15-0 for 300 c. ft.

approximately R2 for 100 c. ft.

Having thus obtained a suitable rate, 25 per cent. to 33 per cent. is added as the contractor's compensation for his time and labour in supervision. Then the contractor is bound to pay the 75 per cent. to the labourers and to make daily payments. His work is measured up weekly by the Sub-Overseer or work agent, and he is paid by the Sub-Divisional Officer. By this system the people are made to work heartily and yet are protected, as the Officer-in-charge and any Inspecting Officer can any day check the daily payment and see whether the people are getting the rates fixed. The rates are also calculated on the prevailing rate of grain, so the people are not paid below the minimum famine wage for the amount of work they do. The contractor has to take all who are drafted to him, so that he runs his chance of profit or loss in the week on the actual daily labour done by the people.

The task work annexe is necessary to relieve all those not strong enough for piece-work. This must be constantly inspected by the Hospital Assistant and Inspecting Officer with a view to drafting from time to time all able-bodied to the piece-work portion of the work (see question 51).

48. A and B were in favour of task-work only, but I doubt whether they took sufficiently real interest in the matter to consider the subject thoroughly.

49. Piece-work with task-work annexed should be introduced from the very start, and relief measures taken early before the people are reduced, so as to be fit for only the task-work. By this means the able-bodied not in actual need are not attracted to the work and the camps are not increased to a size which renders economical working impossible.

50 (*a*). Bhandara seven charges under Public Works Department: Balaghat eleven.

(*b*) Tanks in Behir Tahsili, Balaghat, nine charges.

51. In Bhandara new roads by famine-relief work metalled 56 miles, unmetalled but moorum 9 miles.

In Balaghat metalled 19 miles, unmetalled but moorum 30 miles, unmetalled only earth-work 31 miles.

The metal is only a 4½ inch coat.

52. I attach a plan showing a systematic and economical method of employing people so as to avoid overcrowding. By this means in every length of 4 chains or 400 feet we have 20 men diggers, 64 weak men and women and children 12 to 16, average 16, children 7 to 12 and dependents fit for light tasks, or 897 male units per mile, taking two-thirds number of women and one-third number of children as male units.

In the case of metalled roads we may take double the number, as an equal number would be set to work on gitti-breaking (see second plan attached), and in the time of consolidation, the earthen sides could be run up simultaneously with the metalling.

53. In Balaghat all the roads are of great public utility as the district was in great need of good means of communication. They should all be maintained.

In Bhandara the roads were of great public utility except one small one of 8 miles length (Amgaon-Sathgaon Road), which was constructed to relieve a very overcrowded camp.

54. There will only be room for a few roads, but these are useful ones.—Balaghat, Lamtha-Lalburra, length 14 miles; and in Bhandara, Pauni-Bhiwapur, length 8 miles; Tirora-Khairlanji, length 14 miles, and Karda-Adyar, Pauni, 28 miles.

55. It is the best form of relief-work as regards management and securing individual labour, also a collection up to five years' reserve is very useful. I refer to metal collection near good roads, otherwise the cost of carriage is too excessive to recommend it as a relief-work.

56. No excess over five years' requirements in this Division.

58 (i). It is the best form of labour as it suits every capacity and is understood by the people.

(ii) The benefit is of course very great to the village: in Behir Tahsili, Balaghat, the tanks constructed will be of very great service to the adjacent villages (see paragraph 4).

The only drawback to this form of labour is that you cannot employ a large number of people at one time conveniently, or for any length of time.

59. The Civil Department might arrange that patwaris should keep a list of persons known in each village to be independent of relief, such persons being prohibited from attending any work within five miles of their own village Thus, when the work approaches any village, the patwari's list could be shown to the Officer-in-charge of the camps and these persons excluded from the work.

64 (*a*). Nine tanks have been started in Behir Tahsili, Balaghat, as in attached list. One large tank was constructed by the Revd. Lampard as a relief-work also.

67. I think the Wainganga valley irrigation scheme might prove of use (which is, I believe, filed in the Secretariat).

71 (*a*). Maximum of three to four miles, in greater distances they get too much reduced.

(*b*) I have found them 30 and 40 miles from their villages and they have not objected to being drafted long distances. I think there need be no limit for this.

72. Yes, except in cases of people residing in jungle tracts as in Behir, where the Baigas, the jungle tribe, would, I think, prefer to die in their houses.

73. Yes, certainly. They are quite willing to go for temporary work of this sort. In fact I understand that numbers go in this way to the Assam tea gardens under the impression that they are going for temporary employment.

74. The rule throughout the Division, except with the jungle tribes.

75. No, for over four miles distance the people prefer to stay in the camps.

76. Yes, residence should be obligatory. We have had large crowds on the works when the work passes through populous tracts, each large village turning out *en masse*. High tasks and low rates are not sufficient when the work is close to any village in hard times.

77. Not at all. The hutting has been good, and the people always appreciated it.

78. No; as it was the establishment was small and with difficulty obtained.

79. No.

80. Eight annas.

81. No; they were much better on the works. In Balaghat District we were free from cholera even near places where hundreds had died the year before. I ascribe this good result to the good sanitary and water arrangements and to the fact that the people were out in the open air all day and in good shelter at night.

82. Only provided for the hospitals, kitchens, and for those quite destitute (these last from Charitable Funds).

83. When works are small and numerous, the number of dependents is greater, as the people can more easily send those dependent on them to the works near.

84. Balaghat 45 per cent. task-work and 55 per cent. piece-work: and Bhandara 40 per cent. task-work and 60 per cent. piece-work.

85. In all cases where relief-work is started in good time before the general physique of the people has not fallen too low.

87. See questions 45 and 46. There is no danger in piece-work (1) if the rates are calculated on the existing price of grain, (2) calculated so as to ensure at least the minimum wage to each worker, (3) if the contractor pays daily and is (4) made to keep a daily register of such payments. Also the contractors must be *petty* contractors, not wealthy men, who will not take sufficient interest in the work themselves: and they must receive only small contracts.

88. Each piece-work camp must have a task-work annexe.

89. Yes; a limit is most necessary. I found men and women working from daybreak and on at night by moonlight and making a petty fortune: so it becomes ridiculous as a relief-work. This can be remedied by paying up to the minimum wage as calculated in the rates mentioned against questions 45, 46 and 52. The contractor to be at liberty to pay more if he likes (they usually give an extra pice for heavy work of ramming).

90. I prefer working with a full gang for task-work (as detailed in plan), 20 diggers, 16 shovellers, 48 carriers and 16 beaters, consisting of small children and dependents: this last number varying according to actual number in the gang.

91. No; this was tried in the first stages of relief-works: there were constant complaints and money was not fairly distributed.

92. There is not much reduction, unless *all* task-work ceases. There is a saving in number of mates and in a few work agents and gang muharrirs.

Mr. E. A. Lugard.

93. No.

94. *Class* I.—Specials, as mates, etc.
Class II.—Diggers.
Class III.—Carriers (including weak men, women and children between 12 and 16).
Class IV.—Children between 7 and 12.

95—

Class.	Chittaks.	
	Men and women.	Children.
	No.	No.
Class I	21	...
„ II	19	...
„ III	14	11
„ IV	...	9

96. No.

96A. No.

97. See questions 94 and 95 above, task above 12 as in Class III or two-thirds of man's, below 12 one-third of a man's work.

98. Seven years.

99. The whole gang should be fined always (and not any part of it), Classes I and II two pice, and Classes III and IV one pice, down to the minimum wage in the Central Provinces Code. If this has no effect, they must be reduced to the penal wage. The power to do this on the spot and at once *must* be in the hands of the Officer-in-charge. Any delay for reference to other authority renders the fine useless and misunderstood. The Officer-in-charge, however, must, whenever he inflicts the penal wage on any gang, at once inform the Sub-Divisional Officer of having done so in order to check any abuse of this power to fine heavily. He should also report later the effect of the fine and note whether it presses too hard on the strength of the people.

100. See question 61 above.

101. Yes; it has not resulted in enfeebled health.

102 and 103. Yes; they should be allowed to earn more when they do 25 per cent. extra in a day over the task set, these extra earnings to accumulate from day to day, but limited to the maximum in a week equal to the Sunday's wage (which should not be given gratis).

104, 105 and 106. Yes; 1,000 appears to me to be best for famine workers.

107. Yes; when there is constant inspection and a good Sub-Divisional Officer.

108. See question 54 above.

109, 110 and 111. See questions 23, 48, 50 and 61 above.

112. Men, women and children were very nearly in equal proportion of each in Balaghat, men 1, women 1½, children 2 in Bhandara, but these figures vary so much as to make a definite ratio doubtful.

113. There are a number of men employed as yearly servants by the malguzars: these get doles of grain or money and clothing twice a year. But their wives and children go to work, in ordinary times. So in famine times, when the hirer of labour curtails his expenses, these women and children seek employment on the works. The adult males did not get any extra pay. I have enquired carefully and was informed that the price of private labour did not rise with price of grain. In this case the assistance given by the State was fit and proper.

114. By Civil village relief of all sorts, including petty tank work, also all works not of very large size, which are not easily accessible in parts of the district, but not far from any Tahsili head-quarters.

The Public Works Department to take charge of all large works on which there are 1,000 to 4,000 or more workers, and of all works requiring engineering supervision.

115. The Commissioner to fix dates of opening or closing of works. No direct orders to subordinates on matter of management should be given by Commissioners or Collectors to the subordinates of the camps, but an order book should be kept on each work, and in this the Commissioner or Collector should note what they find wrong and what they wish done. No person to be dismissed from the work or any rules revised without previous intimation to the Executive Engineer, except in the case of proved swindling or ill-treatment of the people, when summary action can be taken; the Executive Engineer being at once informed. I agree with paragraph 14 of Mr. Higham's note on the Central Provinces.

116. The Collector is responsible for the dates of opening and closing, that the relief is proportionate to the need, that there is a suitable food and water supply, proper medical and sanitary arrangements, kitchens for children and gratuitous relief, that the people are properly-treat d and that the general management is properly conducted. The Executive Engineer is responsible for the whole management of the work and for the treatment of the people, and the quality of the work done, including above details; but not for the extent or duration of the work, except as directed by the Commissioner.

117. To his European assistants only.

118. Men in rank of Naib-Tahsildar.

119. Yes; entirely. A man cannot serve two masters well.

120. Yes; most certainly.

121. Executive Engineer and Sub-Divisional Officer should have power to arrest for fraud, etc., at once, without waiting for a warrant; names of the Sub-Divisional Officer having first been submitted to Commissioner for approval.

122. The general order, issued for the conduct of the Public Works Department famine work was, I think, generally also adopted to the Civil Department. Before that the Civil Department worked from the Famine Code assisted by the Sub-Divisional Officer.

123. No. Works not progressing properly were taken over by the Public Works Department in January.

124. Daily in both cases. In this way only can an efficient and direct check on payment be effected.

125. Pice unit.

126. By independent cashiers, thus forming a very good check on peculation by gang muharrirs.

127. No.

128 (i). Yes.

(ii) No: they ran away (Behir) if put on to steady work but accepted gladly such work as jungle cutting and bamboo and basket work. For these jungle tribes congenial tasks should be fixed.

129. Minimum 1,000 to 4,000: maximum with task-work, 1 to 5,000 in piece-work.

130. Yes; no cash doles in any case.

132. Yes; the work abstracts recommended by Mr. Higham are too complicated. There is no need to carry the fines beyond the gang register, where they can be checked by all inspecting officers. Also, comparison of expenditure with the value at normal rates in periodical returns is useless and most misleading as the amounts done are seldom correctly entered. This comparison can only be done when the accounts have been finally audited and a careful re-measurement taken. 'Tasks set and done' are also inaccurate and not required, nor are 'payments due.'

I attach suggestions for daily and weekly reports, or work abstracts, which meet all that I have found necessary.

The daily work abstract shown for the Officer-in-charge will also suit for the gang muharrirs by merely substituting as shown in italics on the form.

133. Employers of labourers often complained that the field work was suffering because their men were on the works.

134. Yes; they had fed and housed these men for years, and these men had left them at a critical time. Men were always sent back to their normal work with the employer who asked for them.

135. Same rates. In reply to enquiries I am told that there were no increases in proportion to rise in price of grain.

136. They were sufficient for the man alone, not for his family.

137. The only method I can suggest is to have works at some distance. No one who can obtain labour at his village would go far.

138. I did not note any beyond the ordinary *takavi* loan tank works.

139. I do not recommend it.

148. Balaghat 2¼ per cent. on the works; Bhandara 0·3 per cent. of population.

149. Yes; but they included a large number of the weaver classes.

150. Yes; and had apparently no relations to support them.

155. Yes; they had to come daily to the works as dependents.

156. No.

165. They considered that they lost caste on the kitchens on the works by receiving cooked food, but I found that this feeling was not maintained to the same extent where we styled the kitchens as serais (dharamsala) instead of poor-houses (kangal khana). Also the objection to the kitchens grew less as the people became more accustomed to them. Any objection on caste prejudice is always got over by distributing dry rations; no one objected to this, but it is then difficult to discriminate who are really in need. None but the really distressed would take cooked food.

167. As grain (cooked food) on the works. Grain certainly (I refer to relief-works only).

196. By tickets of admission given by the Officer-in-charge or Hospital Assistants on the works to all applicants in need.

197. Not on the works. A gang muharrir was put in charge of six gangs, and he had a kitchen in his charge also for the children and dependents of his gangs. They were constantly checked by inspecting officers.

198. Cooked food. No; parents could not be trusted. The institution of children's kitchens was a most beneficial one, and one of the best features of the relief-works.

242. They were admitted to the works the same as the others from the district, and on closing of the works were paid a cash dole sufficient to take them to their own districts, receiving where required their railway fare in addition and despatched under escort to the station. There were not very many wanderers in search of work.

257. Not defective in any way. The whole arrangements were excellent. Every care was taken to ensure good food and water, and careful precautions taken in all sanitation and medical relief.

258. Yes; sufficient and ample supply of medicines, etc.,

273. Rice and some dâl with chapatti of wheat and juari.

274. Two meals: chief meal midday with some reserve supply for the evening: some taking also a sort of rice gruel in the morning.

276. There were two descriptions of food very popular with the people, but very injurious, producing diarrhœa and sickness—prepartions of rice and gram called *phowa* rice and *bhunjee-chenna*. I issued strict orders against the introduction of these in the camps, as they invariably produced sickness. Any of this class of food (prepared by the Dhimar class) is bad.

278. In the kitchens a khichri of boiled rice and dâl—five parts rice to one of dâl with some salt and at times ghi. See instructions for kitchens and register attached.

279. Two; as contained in above instructions. Drink consisted of water filtered through gharras containing sand, and milk for the very weak.

286. None; except the usual objections to cooked food by first admissions to the kitchen.

Yes; in places where grain was not available locally, special arrangements were made with contractors, who supplied the grain there at the current local rates.

General Remarks.

1 The departures from the Central Provinces Famine Code were—

(1) In the task-work the people were at times fined a penal wage on the works. This was very seldom done and then only under very careful supervision. It was tried in the Seoni District, but had not a beneficial effect. I think this was due to its trial when the people were fairly new to the work. In the Bhandara District it was tried with very good results, and as it was done very carefully, there was no harm done to the people. There is no doubt that this power of fining below the minimum wage when used with care and discretion has not only a beneficial effect in inducing better returns of work, but is very necessary to prevent the people becoming slothful and indifferent.

See questions 39 (*a*) and 42 above.

(2) The introduction of piece-work by contractors. This had a most beneficial effect. The works were overcrowded with people who were not only not in actual need, but also by many very well-to-do. For a minimum of work they secured the daily wage. But the introduction of the piece-work drove these off at once. The camps assumed a much more wholesome and manageable aspect, and there was a large quantity of good work done; in fact the greater part—I might say three-fourths—of the useful work done by the whole famine works was under this system.

The task-work was retained in conjunction with this piece-work, so the weakly ones did not suffer.

See questions 39, 44, 45, 46 and 87 above.

(3) The introduction of the piece-work payment-by-result system. To this was added a rider that the people were only to be paid after every three days' work. This pressed hard on them as they had got used to daily payment. This cleared off all the remaining people who were not in actual need. Also many others left in search of other employment, as this system was very unpopular on account of the three days' wait for pay. There was no harm done, however, as there were harvest and other works available. The people got used to this system, but I think this was to a great extent due to slackness in allotting and measuring tasks by the work agents or Sub-Overseers. For further objections see Question 44 above. It had the further good effect of reducing the camps, I think completely, to those only who were in need of help.

II. I strongly recommend the system of piece-work under *petty* contractors (limited also to extent of their contract say 2 miles length of road-work as a maximum) with task-work annexe. See full description, questions 39, 44, 45, 46 and 87 above.

III. Other suggestions—

(*a*) I have attached forms of work abstracts, daily for gang muharrirs, and daily and weekly for Officers-in-charge. I have had a large and varied experience of work and consider that these meet all requirements. See question 132 above.

(*b*) I attach a form of gang register which I recommend.

(*c*) The mate's list, or names of those in the gangs with their caste and villages, *must* be written upon the back of this and renewed every time a new register is started. I have had great trouble at times by the omission of this in checking fraud and when drafting gangs from one work to another.

(*d*) I attach also a form of kitchen register and rules. A kitchen should be limited to 300 inmates.

(*e*) A very important point is that the number and pay of the staff employed should be laid down definitely in proportion to the work. I found, for instance, very heavy expenditure on the special gangs for water, conservancy, etc., in the camps. I attach a circular which I issued to this effect. This limiting or defining of the staff applies generally throughout the work; the number of Assistants, Accountants, Sub-Overseers, should all be defined in proportion to work, and genuine efforts made to reach the limit laid down by drafting from other places if the local supply is insufficient. In acute distress I strongly recommend an Accountant and European Sub-Divisional Officer of the standing of an Assistant Engineer, for every six camps of over 4,000 relief-workers in each. The extra cost of salary will be repaid tenfold by the life and expenditure saved in the supervision exercised. A Sub-Overseer for every two large camps of 4,000, and a

Mr. E. A. Lugard.

work agent to every 1,000 workers in task-work, and to every 2,000 in piece-work by contractors. A gang muharrir in charge of every six gangs of the strength mentioned in question 90 and of one kitchen. Officer-in-charge and clerical staff as laid down in Central Provinces General Order No. C.-498. Petty staff as in my printed circular. Executive Engineer must have a first class Accountant at head-quarters, who must be given liberty to select as many clerks as he needs while the work is heavy. Also a junior Executive or Assistant Engineer *who will remain only at head-quarters* and deal with office work and watch the general dealings from there. Running a charge undermanned entails great loss of life and heavy expenditure, and my experience is that no Native Sub-Divisional Officer (under grade of Assistant Engineer) should be allowed, to hold a charge, however small, because he has the lives of his fellow-countrymen in his charge and I regret to say that I found no genuine sympathy at all *throughout this famine* from native subordinates (or officials) for their suffering fellow-countrymen.

[Accompaniment to Questions Nos. 45 and 46.]

List of rates circulated for payment of Piece-work Contractors in the Bhandara Division on receipt of orders limiting payment to workers to the minimum wage.

Sub-head of work.	Normal rates.	Rates to be allowed to Contractor. Grain at—					Rates to be paid by Contractors to labourers. Grain at—				
		10 seers.	9 seers.	8 seers.	7 seers.	6 seers.	10 seers.	9 seers.	8 seers.	7 seers.	6 seers.
	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.
Moorum spreading and consolidation .	0 8 0	0 12 0	0 14 0	1 0 0	1 2 0	1 6 0	0 9 0	0 10 0	0 12 0	0 14 0	1 0 0
Do. consolidation . . .	0 4 0	0 6 0	0 7 0	0 8 0	0 9 0	0 12 0	0 4 0	0 5 0	0 6 0	0 7 0	0 9 0
Gitti-breaking, quartz . . .	1 14 0	2 0 0	2 8 0	3 12 0	3 0 0	3 12 0	1 8 0	1 14 0	2 0 0	2 4 0	2 13 0
Do., hard metal . . .	...	3 2 0	3 8 0	4 0 0	4 10 0	5 10 0	2 6 0	2 10 0	3 0 0	3 8 0	4 4 0
Do., spreading and consolidation.	1 8 0	1 12 0	2 0 0	2 6 0	3 0 0	3 6 0	1 4 0	1 8 0	1 12 0	2 4 0	2 8 0
Do., consolidation only. .	1 0 0	0 12 0	1 0 0	1 8 0	2 0 0	2 6 0	0 9 0	0 12 0	1 2 0	1 8 0	1 12 0

Note.—To show how rates are arrived at—
Take grain at 9 seers per rupee and the work, that of metal breaking white quartz.
From General Order No. C.-498, minimum wage for a man is R0-1-6 and a good task is 6 c. ft.
for a woman is R0-1-6 ,, ,, 4½ c. ft.

In one day	20 men	do	120 c. ft.	
,,	40 women	,,	180 ,,	
		Total	300 ,,	

				R	a.	p.
20 men	at	R0	1 6	=1	14	0
40 women	at	,, 0	1 6	=3	12	0
			Total	5	10	0

for 300 c. ft.

This comes to Re. 1-14-0 % and 33 % is added for contractor's supervision, profit and loss, etc.

E. A. LUGARD,
Executive Engineer,
Bhandara Division.

[Accompaniment to question No. 64.]

Tanks in Behir by Public Works. Department Famine Relief Works.

Name.	Expenditure, Famine Relief Works (including gratuitous relief.)	Additional cost to complete as Famine Relief Works.	Additional cost of masonry, etc., not suitable for Famine Relief Works.	Remarks.
	R	R	R	
Bazal . .	7,400	300	600	
Taregaon .	2,300	150	300	
Mohgaon .	1,646	50	200	
Bhilwani .	6,136	...	500	
Ghoradehi .	3,333	200	350	
Alna . .	4,893	250	350	
Ajgora . .	2,527	150	250	
Bansuli .	1,233	100	250	
Bakharikona .	2,707	200	300	
	34,675			
	Tank by Revd. Lampard as Famine Relief Work.			
Basankhar .	2,200	500	900	Masonry in excess of other tanks.

Note.—Columns 3 and 4 are liable to revision as the tanks are under careful survey at present and final estimates under preparation.

[Accompaniments to Question No. 132 and General Remarks III (a).]

NOTE FOR PREPARATION OF THIS FORM.

1. The Officer-in-charge will fill up the form on reverse and forward it weekly to the Sub-Divisional Officer.

2. The entries will be the totals for each day abstracted from the daily abstract of the Officer-in-charge.

3. Sunday wages will be paid only to those who have earned it during the week by special work.

4. The abstract of first page will be filled in by Sub-Divisional Officer.

5. The Kitchen register must accompany this weekly.

Register No._____ *

(* To be filled in and signed by Sub-Divisional Officer before issue to the work.)

WORK ABSTRACT.

Famine Relief Camp No._____

_____ District.

_____ Division.

Officer-in-charge._____

For week ending Saturday_____

No._____ *dated*_____ 189 .

Forwarded to the District Officer and District or Divisional Engineer.

_____ Sub-Divisional Officer.

ABSTRACT.

I. Task-work—

(1) Week's wages to task-workers only (total at foot of column 10).....R_____.

Gratuitous relief as per Kitchen register..... R_____.

Total R.....

(2) Quantity of work done by task-work (total at foot of columns 11 to 16).....Cubic feet ....

(3) No. of units relieved—

(*a*) total of column (5).....

(*b*) total of Kitchen register.....

Total R.....

II. Piece-work—

(1) Amount paid during the week (total of column 21) R.....

(2) Number of units relieved (total of columns 17 to 19 inclusive) .....

(3) Rate per male unit (total of column 22).....

Date.	TOTAL NUMBER ON WORK.				TASK WORK.												PIECE-WORK.												Remarks.
	Relief-workers of all kinds.				Classification of Daily Labourers.				Amount paid.			Work done.						Piece-workers of all kinds.						Work done.						
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Total.	Class I.	Class II.	Class III.	Class IV.	Rs.	A.	P.	Earthwork.	Moorum.	Etc.				Men.	Women.	Children.	Male units.	Amount paid.	Rate per male unit.	Metal breaking.	Consolidation.	Etc.				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	

Dated the _____ *189*

_____ *Sub-Divisional Officer.*

OFFICER-IN-CHARGE.

Weekly Report by Sub-Divisional Officer for period ending Saturday_____189 .

1. Condition of the relief-workers.

2. Outburst of disease.

3. Efficacy of food and water-supply arrangements. Grain used as basis of wages and its price in seers per rupee.

4. Sufficiency of staff and organization of gangs.

5. Succinct notes on work personally inspected, and anything which should be brought to notice on the famine-relief works.

*Dated at*_____
*The*_____*189* . } _____*Officer-in-charge.*

*Dated at*_____
*The*_____*189* . } _____*Sub-Divisional Officer.*

NOTE.—In 5 should be noted clearly the present state of the work, as nature of work in each mile, difficulty or otherwise of providing sufficient work, sufficiency of hutting, whether labourers are coming to the work or not, etc.

[Accompaniment to Question 132 and General Remarks III (*a*).]

NOTE FOR PREPARATION OF THIS FORM.

1. The $\frac{\text{Officer-in-charge}}{\textit{Gang Muharrir}}$ will fill up the form on reverse and $\frac{\text{forward}}{\textit{submit}}$ it daily to the $\frac{\text{Sub-Divisional Officer}}{\textit{Officer-in-charge}}$

2. Columns 6 to 9, Class I, is for special workers as mates. Class II for diggers only. Class III for carriers, including children 12 to 16. Class IV for children 7 to 12.

3. To prepare column 20, the number of male units will be the number of men in column 17 plus ⅔rds of the number of women in column 18 and ½rd of the number of children in column 19, all added together.

4. Column 21 to be to the nearest rupee.

5. Column 22 is prepared by dividing amount paid in column 21 by number of male units in column 20.

Register No. _____ *

(* To be filled in and signed by Sub-Divisional Officer before issue to the work.)

WORK ABSTRACT.

Famine Relief Camp No._____.

_____District.

_____Division.

Officer-in-charge_____
(*Gang Muharrir*)

No._____ *dated*_____189 .

Forwarded to the Sub-Divisional Officer.
Submitted. *Officer-in-charge.*

_____Officer-in-Charge,
Gang Muharrir.

Date 1st.	TOTAL NUMBER ON WORK.				TASK-WORK.												PIECE-WORK.												Remarks.
	Relief-workers of all kinds.				Classification of Daily Labourers.				Amount paid.			Work done.						Piece-workers of all kinds.						Work done.						
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Total.	Class I.	Class II.	Class III.	Class IV.	Rs.	A.	P	Earthwork	Moorum.	Etc.				Men.	Women.	Children.	Male units.	Amount paid.	Rate per male unit.	Metal breaking.	Consolidation.	Etc.				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Muharrir, Gopal Rao																													
,, (Mate)																													
,, Balgovind																													
,, Ramdas																													
,, Gopalswamy																													
Total																													

Camp

Dated the ——— 189 .

Officer-in-charge,
(*Gang Muharrir*

Note.—The entries in *italics* show the alternative use of this form as a Gang Muharrir's Work Abstract or Day Book.

[Accompaniment to General Remarks III *b* and *c*.]

Mr. E. A. Lugard.

I.

Earthwork.

GANG REGISTER NO. 1.

Mate

(*Wages on 11 seers to the rupee 1.*)

(*Task-work.*)

Class.	April 1897. Items.	Wages.		8 No.	8 Amount.	9 No.	9 Amount.	10 No.	10 Amount.	Etc.
		a. p.	*pice.*		℞ *a. p.*		℞ *a. p.*		℞ *a. p.*	
I	Mate	2 3	9	1	0 2 3	1	...	1	...	
II	Men	1 9	7	10	1 1 6	10	...	10	...	
	Women	1 6	6							
III	Men	1 6	6	25	2 5 6	25	...	25	...	
	Women	1 6	6	40	3 12 0	40	...	40	...	
	Children 12—16									
IV	Children 7—12	9	3	4	0 3 0	4	...	4	...	
	Total			80	7 8 3	80	7 8 3	80	7 8 3	
		a. p.	*pice.*							
Fine		0 6	2	76	2 6 0	...	...	76	2 6 0	
Amount paid				...	5 2 3	...	7 8 3	...	5 2 3	
Signature of Muharrir		Kesho Rao.				K. R.		K. R.		
Task.		Due.	Done.			Due.	Done.	Due.	Done.	
		800	720			800	810	800	740	
Signature of Work Agent.		M. Ismael.				M. I.		M. I.		
Lead.						Number of carrier units.				
Lift.										
Reduced lead.										

Reduced lead $R = 26 + H + 12\,V$

where R = Horizontal lead

V = Vertical lift

Number of carrier units = $\frac{T\text{ (task)} \times R\text{ (Reduced lead)}}{10{,}000\text{ (Constant)}}$.

L. E. A.
Ingard.

MATE'S LIST.

*Mate*_____. *Gang No.*_____.

Class I.			Class II.			Class III.			Class IV.		
Name.	Caste.	Village.	Name.	Caste.	Village.	Name.	Caste.	Village.	Name.	Caste.	Village.

[Accompaniment to General Remarks III (c).]

CIRCULAR No. .

SPECIAL GANGS.

To all Sub-Divisional Officers and Officers-in-charge.

In continuation of my No. , dated , as there still appears to be doubt about the number and wages for the special gangs, I lay down the limits to be allowed.

Take for example a camp of 4,000 relief-workers.

I.—Water-supply.

* To each two gangs, one piao is now sufficient, for each piao one strong water-carrier is required, and one weak woman for distributing water.

These are to be paid the D wage only.

Suppose the 4,000 to be divided into 44 gangs and one special gang—

(*a*) For piaos we need $22 \times 1 = 22$ men, $22 \times 1 = 22$ women } at D wage.

Six water barrels are sufficient. For each water barrel we need one man at D wage.

$6 \times 1 = 6$ men at D wage.

(*b*) For Hospital we need 2 water-carriers, strong men.

1 distributor woman to every 12 patients.

$2 \times 1 = 2$ men at D wage.

$1 \times 1 = 1$ woman at D wage.

(*c*) For the camp we need one water-carrier for Officers' quarters, 2 for all kitchens at the camp.

2 water-carriers, strong men at D wage.

3 distribution women at D wage for the coolie huts for supply for cooking purposes.

5 men at D wage.

3 women at D wage.

Total water-supply gang { 35 men at D wage. 25 women at D wage.

II.—Conservancy.

One conservancy guard for each 8 gangs, say, six strong men at D wage and 6 pies.

Two guards for Officers' quarters, all hospitals and kitchens, and all coolie huts in camp. These two men are responsible for all the camp, and every building and its surrounding.

The first 6 guards are to inspect the sanitary arrangements along the road, and to keep all animals and carts off the road when necessary: they will keep travelling along the portion of the road occupied by the 8 gangs in charge of each. Total 8 men at D wage and six pies.

III.—Hospital.

Two men to assist in distributing medicine at D wage and 6 pies.

1 male attendant for each 6 patients (men).

1 female do. do. do. (women).

say 2 men, 2 women } at D wage.

IV.—Sweepers.

16 are sufficient: to be paid at R6 per month for male.

R5-0-0 do.

female (but more may be paid when necessary). Out of this 16, one should be selected as a Jamadar sweeper at R8 a month. He will be responsible for the work of all the others.

V.—Mates.

One to each gang at D wage and 6 pies.

44 gangs and one special gang gives 45.

One conservancy mate in charge of whole arrangements at D wage and 6 pies.

One water-supply mate at same rate.

Four treasury guards at do. (two per day, two per night).

Two dâk runners at do.

VI.—Kitchens.

Cooks same as laid down in the rules of Superintendent of Works; wages D rate and 6 pies only.

† 1 Kitchen Gang Muharrir (all kitchens to be in his charge at R12 per month).

VII.—General.

1 Chaprassi for Officer-in-charge at R6 a month.

1 Khalassi to each Sub-Overseer at do. do.

VIII.—Cholera.

In case of an outbreak of cholera—

1 Water-carrier to every 6 patients.

1 Distributor do. do.

1 Cook.

1 Attendant (male) to every 6 males.

1 do. (female) do. do.

All these attendants to get 4 annas a day.

Sweepers to be paid 8 annas a day for burying a corpse from cholera, 3 annas for a corpse from any other causes.

[Accompaniment to Question No. 278 and General Remarks III. (d).]

Instructions for the management of Public Works Department Kitchens.

I.—These kitchens were originally intended for small children belonging to people on the works. Under recent orders all dependents, of whatever age, are to be admitted as well as any starving people unconnected with the workers who apply for food.

II.—The persons attending each kitchen will then be classed according as they are (*a*) connected with the works, and (*b*) unconnected with the works. Under class (*a*) will fall all non-working dependents, whether children or adults, except babies in arms. Children over 7 who are too thin to do much work, may be classed as dependents if they are willing to take cooked food. *No cash payment is to be made to any dependent.*

III.—Anyone who brings an order of admission from a Circle Officer (Revenue Inspector) or officer of superior rank must be admitted.

IV.—The food to be given is a "khichri" of boiled rice and dâl, 5 parts of rice, 1 part of dâl, some salt should be added of course, and if possible a little ghi or oil. The standard measure should be a tin pot $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. This holds the cooked food equivalent of three chattaks.

Three of these measures should be given to each adult man.

Two and three-quarters to each adult woman.

From one to two-and-a-half to each child, according to age.

In preparing each day's food the average may be taken as 5 chattaks.

V.—It is well to distribute twice daily if possible. But if the kitchen is crowded, this will be difficult and one meal will suffice. People should be allowed to take away what they cannot eat on the spot.

VI.—One cook will suffice for 150 to 200 children. A water-carrier and muharrir will be required, and perhaps a warder to keep order.

VII.—Persons of class (*a*) will be shown as at present on the register of their gang.

The Gang Muharrir should give each of them a ticket showing:—

Number of gang.

Name and class.

Date of issue.

It will be well to maintain a separate attendance register for persons of class (*b*), giving names in the first column

* Number of piaos according to season.
† For general superintendence of all kitchens.

Mr. E. A. Lugard.

and providing a column for each day in the month. They also should be given tickets.

VIII.—The attendance of each day should be abstracted in a register of the following form :—

Date.	NUMBER FED.												
	Class (*a*).						Class (*b*).					Total.	Amount of food used.
	Gang No.	Men.	Women.	Children I.	Children II.	Children III.	Men.	Women.	Children I.	Children II.	Children III.		

Receipts and expenditure should be shown in a simple form of *jama-kharch*, extracts from which will serve as bills for replenishing an imprest or as vouchers for expenditure. The amount of food charged for in the *jama-kharch* should of course correspond with the amounts shown in the attendance register.

IX.—Kitchen tickets should be furnished with string so as to be carried hung on the neck. A convenient material is a thin sheet of zinc on which entries can be written indelibly with either sulphuric acid or *nila tutia*.

[Accompaniment to Question 278 and General Remark III.-(d.)]

Charge No._____.

_____ DIVISION.

Weekly Kitchen Return for week ending _____ *189* .

Name of Camp _____. Hospital Assistant in charge _____. Officer-in-charge _____.

Date.	Number of persons fed.			Total.	Quantity and Expenditure during the week.				Date of opening Kitchen.	Expenditure from beginning.	Remarks.
	Men.	Women.	Children.		Quantity.	Description.	Rate.	Amount.			
								₹ a. p.			₹ a. p.
August 8th	64	15	222	301	1,436 lbs.	Rice . . .	1/ per 14 lbs.	102 9 3			
„ 9th	87	19	209	315	222 „	Oil . . .	1/ „ 13 „	17 1 3			
„ 10th	71	19	151	241							
„ 11th	60	31	275	366	2⅝ ch.	Saffron . . .	/4 lbs.	0 10 6	July 15th .	319	Rate per unit . 0 0 9
„ 12th	57	30	275	362	31 lbs.	Salt . . .	/1 lb.	1 15 0			
„ 13th	200	150	300	650	5⅓ ch.	Chillies . . .	/4 lbs.	1 4 0			
„ 14th	49	29	165	253							
Total .	592	304	1,582	2,478	Food Total			123 8 0			
					Establishment			3 0 0			
					Miscellaneous			...			
					GRAND TOTAL .			126 8 0			

Date _____ *189* .

_____ *Hospital Assistant.*

_____ *Officer-in-charge.*

Mr. A. Marriott.

Written answers to the Commission's questions by MR. A. MARRIOTT, *Extra-Assistant Commissioner, Jabalpur.*

*10. Fifteen per cent. is certainly liable to be exceeded in certain tracts, especially hilly and jungle tracts.

11. Have no statistics.

12. On some occasions, *e. g.*, in the slack season, the proportion of persons relieved was larger than actually necessary.

Persons were relieved on works who were not in urgent need of relief.

I attribute this to the fact that work was obtainable for those willing to work: they were sitting idle in their own homes; and owing to the bad times, there were but few of the ordinary distractions, such as marrying and giving in marriage on the *tapis*. Village life was more than ordinarily dull, while at the works all was bustle and life. This class of people would in any year go to works if opened in the vicinity of their villages. More especially if the works were badly managed and task not properly enforced as was the case in some of Public Works Department camps.

13. At the commencement of the famine a much larger proportion might have been relieved; but this was due to the attitude of the people themselves, who would not attend the works and delayed their departure from their homes until their constitution had been seriously impaired, and, in some of the more remote tracts, until they had not strength for the journey as the works were far apart. Gradually, however, this resistance or apathy was overcome.

15. The relief given has, I think, been entirely successful, but it should have been started very much earlier.

16. The introduction of the piece-work or payment by results system was immediately followed by a large decrease in the numbers on relief, and I consider that the decrease was a direct result of the change. At the time I was anxious about this matter, as I was of opinion that persons in need of relief left the works and were wandering about. Most of the persons, however, in need of relief filtered back to one or other of the works, and I don't think that any real evil effects followed the change except perhaps temporarily.

Reducing relief-centres which were overcrowded and unmanageable and did more harm than good in the state they were in.

17. I don't think the change had any effect on the death-rate.

18. No; certainly not.

19. Yes; all persons able to work were made to work. All helpless persons were treated at the nearest hospital relief-centre, except where they were dependants on workers, and they then received a subsistence allowance.

20. Women and children had also to execute a task. At one time, May and June, over 90 per cent. of the workers in my circle were women and children; children's gangs were formed with distinct success.

21. Confining oneself to persons on works (*i.e.*, excluding village-relief) the numbers of destitute persons unable to work would be comparatively small.

I have no figures.

22. (1) Yes; (2) the task has been a full one, considered with reference to the working capacity of each gang in some camps. In others tasks were absolutely inadequate; (3) on paper the wage was a mere subsistence wage. In reality, owing to faults in setting the tasks, etc., it was much more.

23. Yes, the works have been more numerous. See remarks to Q. 77. Residence on a relief-work is, in my opinion, a test of severe necessity except among lower castes.

27. For the first six months gratuitous relief was given in poor-houses and by money doles to people in their homes. After that date children were relieved in large numbers at kitchens. Village relief in money doles in villages was the main form.

28. I think that the risk of a too free grant of village-relief was effectually prevented, and I think that village-relief is the most efficient and economical form of relief and was kept strictly within bounds.

29. Village relief has undoubtedly saved many lives.

I do not think it has demoralized the people, and when village-relief was closed in no village was any disinclination shown by the people to take up the support of the village paupers. I do not think it helped to keep villages and households together.

32. The agricultural labourers will quickly recover; the tenants will recover, but more slowly.

53. I do not think that all the roads will be effectively maintained. They will probably be abandoned if they fall into disrepair before the people have got into the new route.

54. Plenty of new roads.

55. I have never been in favour of metal collection for several reasons:—

(1) The labourers are unused to the work.

(2) Accidents from stone slipping, splinter flying, etc., are frequent.

(3) It is merely exercise for arms, and hence not a healthful exercise, being of too sedentary a nature.

(4) Women ought not to be put on to break metal, and the mere collection of stones is very soon over.

(5) Sufficient metal can be collected with a large camp in a comparatively short time, and the camp has to be continually moving.

(6) The initial cost of hammers, etc., is very heavy, and when the famine is over 90 per cent. of tools are no use to any one.

I do not think metal collection is a good form of employment for relief labour.

56. Yes.

57. Tanks are an excellent form of relief-work, as they provide labour to which the people are accustomed; numbers can provide their own digging implements.

In this district (Jabalpur) irrigation by tanks is not resorted to to any extent, and consequently tanks can hardly be said to benefit the villages except by the improvement of the water-supply for domestic purposes; if the tanks were more numerous, they would, I think, be used for irrigation purposes and be a permanent benefit.

59. An ordinary village tank cannot accommodate more than 1,000 persons.

60. No; the supply of possible tanks has not been exhausted, and we can rely on employing large numbers on them again.

63 to 66. No.

67. No. 6.

II.

71. (*a*). Six miles.

71. (*b*). 20 to 25 miles.

72. Yes.

73. Yes.

74. The rule in small numbers, that is to say, on every camp there were about 5 to 25 per cent. of the workers resident on the works.

75. Residence has not been made a definite condition of relief; excepting foreigners, very few of the workers could not get relief within 10 miles of their homes.

76. No. I am not in favour of making residence obligatory or of indirectly inducing it by concentrating the works. I have no evidence, but I recollect that at times the state of the workers, judging from their appearance, clothes, etc., made me think they did not require relief.

A high task and low rates *if enforced* are ample tests.

77. Residence on the work is of two kinds—

(1) Residence in the sheds provided for the purpose, and (2) squatting under a tree anywhere within a mile of the works.

The first is distasteful to the people, as they don't know what to expect, and think they lay conditions on themselves by living in the sheds.

The second is not. Many of the labouring classes—Gonds, Kols, etc., leave their villages for months in the year and go out and camp in the forest, build their little thatched huts; again look at the hundreds of people who come down every year for the harvesting of the rabi crop. They have no objection to leaving their homes temporarily.

The higher classes do object, but then they can nearly always live in a neighbouring village.

77. No.

78. No; certainly not. In the late famine it was almost impossible to get supervising officers, *e.g.*, in my circle I

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

had one officer-in-charge for two works 9 miles apart merely because officers-in-charge, work agents, etc., were almost impossible to get. The supply is absolutely inadequate, and I do not suppose that in future famines the demand is at all likely to be met.

79. No reductions for distance were made in the task, and I cannot call to mind of a single instance of distance from the works being put forward as an excuse for not doing the full task.

80. The cost of hutting must of course vary in almost every camp. The cost is largely dependent on the distance at which materials are obtainable; when long barracks are built, the cost is something enormous and out of all proportion to the shelter provided. If they build their own huts, the cost per family would be from 1 to 3 days' pay of the family at the minimum wage. The actual cost of course is again dependent on the basis on which the wages are fixed; with a 10 seers basis hutting accommodation should not cost more than 2 to 4 annas per head.

81. No; I don't think so. Except for 10 days' rain in February, I do not think the people suffered from the cold and discomfort. After that date most camps had hutting accommodation.

82. Residence was not enforced.

83. When the works are small and numerous, the proportion of dependants will be much larger than when they are large and few; the reason being that, in the former, mothers will be able to bring all their small children to the works. If the works are larger and few, the dependants will be chiefly resident on the work: as a mother cannot bring more than one child a distance over 3 miles, the number of children dependants will be considerably lessened.

85. Yes.

88. Piece-work on advantageous rates, half as much again or double ordinary rates as was necessary.

89. I would not limit the earnings at all. If very high wages were being continually earned, a reduction in the rates is sufficient.

90. From 20 to 30 persons.

91. I am of opinion that the payments will be fairly made if made through the mates. In all works under me this practice was in force and was very successful.

The complaints were practically *nil*.

93. None whatever.

I regret that, owing to the scarcity of copies both of the Famine Commissioner's and Mr. Higham's notes, I am unable to answer questions referring to them.

IV.

114 to 117. The conclusions arrived at by the Jabalpur Division Famine Conference are, I think, sound.

118. This is almost impossible to answer; in my own circle a Revenue Inspector, a Naib-Tahsildar and a candidate for Government employment were the most successful officers-in-charge; at the same time there were Revenue Inspectors, Naib-Tahsildars and candidates for employment who were entire failures.

Retired officers I would not employ in any case.

119. Most certainly.

120. Yes; they can and should.

121. No; I don't think it either necessary or desirable. During ten months I don't think I tried half-a-dozen cases from any of the Relief Camps, and I was the only Magisterial Officer continually on tour in the whole of one tahsil containing two Circle Relief Officers.

122. Works under Civil Agency were, for the most part, task-works, while Public Works Department Camps were, as a rule, piece-works.

123. No. No.

V.

126. Payments should never be made by the gang moharrirs.

127. No.

128 (*i*). There was in the beginning, but not afterwards.

128 (*ii*). They were steady workers, amenable to discipline and did good work.

129. Maximum 3,000.
Minimum 1,000.

130. Yes; kitchens in all cases for children able to eat the food and a pice for infants in arms to the mother.

VI-A.

133. I received only one complaint from a private employer who had received a loan from Government, to the effect that, in spite of his paying more than was paid at relief-works, he could not get labourers.

134. On enquiry I found his complaint to be groundless and put forward as an excuse for not starting work properly with the money received.

135. Very slightly in excess.

136. The rates were sufficient I think.

137. If found necessary a reduction in rates.

138. Yes; particularly in jungly tracts.

Works were undertaken by them with money received through loans under the Land Improvements Act. These works would not have been undertaken but for these loans.

139. Yes; provided loans were given by Government at a very early stage of the famine.

VI-B.

149. Yes.

150. Yes.

151. Such persons are supported by their own relatives as a rule and, if they have none, by the whole village community.

They are thrown upon the State during famine because the community, however willing, can no longer support themselves and deserted their villages in large numbers.

152. I have no figures, but I should say the greater part were women and children. Hardly any were *pardanashins*. *Pardanashins*, as a rule, are confined to cities and very large villages.

153. No. Yes.

154. Yes.

155. No.

156. No; unless the dependant showed signs of distress.

157. Yes.

158. Yes. The only precautions that can be taken are continued inspections by Revenue Inspectors and the Circle Relief Officer and his assistants, and the maintenance of diaries by all officers of and above the rank of Revenue Inspectors.

160. I don't think so. It used to be refused at first by some, but not so much for fear of a social or caste stigma as from the circulation of absurd stories.

161. I don't think so.

162. Yes, and in many villages I put them on the work in filling up lanes and hollows and improving the village streets.

163. No.

164. In the beginning such kitchens would be a very good criterion of the acuteness of the distress, and would be, I think, preferable to gratuitous relief in villages.

165. The lower castes have no objection, and with children of all castes there is very little objection; with adults, however, the feeling or prejudice is strong enough to prevent their coming to the kitchens until they had tried to better their position by wandering.

166. I don't think so.

167. Money. I prefer a money dole.

168. It was paid in their villages.

169. There used to be complaints, but it was impossible to bring them home to the patwaris; it was very probably done, but I don't think on an extensive scale.

170. The Revenue Inspectors were doubled.

171. To no extent.

185. Relief-centres were opened prior to the introduction of village-relief; grain was given in some and money doles at others.

186. The recipients were supposed to do some work on tanks as a rule, but practically no task was exacted and very little work was done.

187. Yes; all the relief-centres were in a state of chaos.

188. The mortality was high; there was no epidemic disease in my circle, except very acute diarrhœa, which was practically epidemic.

Mr. A. Marriott.

189. Relief-centres where money or grain doles are given are, I think, worse than useless, and should never be resorted to. Relief-centres where cooked food is given in practically rural poor-house or kitchen is what is required at the early stage of distress.

189. Yes; much better.

190. Not that I know of.

192. Yes; at their commencement they were entirely in the hands of the Village Committee, with the schoolmaster or patwari as Secretary, and then unofficial agency was much used.

The Committee, however, did so badly that though they remained on in theory, in practice they were not used at all and were of no use.

194. They are invaluable in conjunction with relief-works, and may be established with very great advantage (chiefly to children) as widely as possible.

195. Kitchens in the beginning would be of great value in determining the acuteness of distress. After people had, however, been accustomed to receive money doles in their own homes it would be a very difficult matter to make them go to kitchens and they would endeavour to hang on till the harvest.

I do not think it advisable to start them at the end of the famine.

196. Yes; to all applicants.

197. I have only experience of children's kitchens where adult wanderers were, of course, fed. Supervision of kitchens cost less trouble than any other form of relief. The waste on misapplication of food was almost *nil*.

The only arrangements possible were inspection from time to time, counting the children tallying with the register, and the state of the children themselves. They were in my circle all under officials, schoolmasters.

198. By cooked food certainly, generally I think they spent it on the children, but on unsuitable food.

200. Yes; as a rule they have spent it on labourers.

201. The benefit is invaluable. Yes.

203 & 204. No.

205. No.

206. Yes.

232. Yes; if amount available for taccavi is insufficient.

233. Yes.

234. Yes; by drawing the people back to their villages and giving them a fresh start in life.

237. Clothes.

239. Yes; certainly.

240. Yes.

242. Relief-centres and advances to Police and by warning mukaddams and kotwars to relieve persons in need of relief. Yes.

They came down in large numbers for the harvest, and immigrants from Native States were very numerous.

246. No.

Written statement of evidence by MR. W. N. MAW, *Officiating Deputy Commissioner, Sambalpur.*

Mr. W. N. Maw.

(A).—DEPARTURES FROM THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES FAMINE CODE, WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES DURING THE RECENT FAMINE.

1. From November 1896 to August 1897 I was working in the Jabalpur District as a Famine Relief Officer. From August 1897 to December I was officiating as Deputy Commissioner of Mandla. Both districts are in the same Division, and the measures of State relief used in both districts were naturally the same.

They consisted of—

(1) Village-relief.

(2) Works under the Public Works Department.

(3) Local works or Relief Centres.

(4) Poor-houses.

(5) Loans to agriculturists—

(*a*) for works;

(*b*) for seed or cattle.

(6) Kitchens.

(7) Relief to starving wanderers through the Police.

The measures of private relief were:—

(1) Distribution of the money received from the Charitable Relief Fund.

(2) Distribution of money subscribed locally.

(3) Distribution of American grain.

2. All the measures of State relief noted above were Code measures. The Code's prescriptions are for the most part general in their character, and though in all the different kinds of relief details had to be elaborated during the course of the famine, the spirit of the prescriptions was not departed from to any great extent.

The principal deviation from the prescriptions of the Famine Code relating to village-relief was that the test for qualification was the physical condition of the pauper, and that the restrictions contained in Section 34 of the Code were not strictly adhered to. Had this been the case, the power of the Famine Relief Officer to save life would have been restricted also. For instance, many villages were at a considerable distance from a relief-work, and the villagers could not be induced by threats or persuasion to leave their villages. In my circle in the Jabalpur District, there was one Patwari's circle containing six villages, which was entirely cut off from the rest of the district by a portion of the Native State of Rewah. The most northern village of the Patwari's circle was about 12 miles from British territory, and it was inhabited by Gond aborigines.

Scarcely a man from these villages came into the Jabalpur District for relief, and when the distress was very severe, it was necessary to put several persons on village-relief who did not come under the exact wording of Section 34.

This, however, was an exceptional case, but I will give an instance which applies to any village in a British district. I refer to the case of women with four or five children ranging from, say, six to twelve years of age. Such women very often absolutely refused to leave their villages, especially if they were widows and their husbands had been cultivators, as they were afraid that as soon as they had left the village their houses would be occupied by new tenants. The women usually presented a miserable appearance caused by evident privation, but they had not reached such a state of emaciation or physical weakness as to disable them from earning their living, and they did not come under Section 34 (*c*), because there were no infant children in their homes to require their attendance.

Another case is that of the poverty-striken cultivator who had received about R15 or R20 from the Charitable Relief Fund, and spent it in plough cattle and seed. It was absolutely necessary for such cultivators to stay in their villages, and I often put them on village-relief when it seemed probable that they would fall victims to the famine unless so relieved; such cases and many others did not come under Section 34.

An amendment to the Code was proposed at the late Conference.

4. Works under the Public Works Department.

A very necessary simplification of the Code was made in only classifying workers as B or D and omitting classes A and C altogether.

The most important deviation of course was the introduction of piece-work. The experiment did not succeed in Mandla, and caused many of the workers to leave the works, and when this happened, piece-work was abolished in the district, much to the sorrow of the workers at one out of the six works who were mostly Gonds, accustomed to road work, and were able to earn 4 annas a day under the piece-work system at a time when the maximum pay of a man under task-work was only 2 annas.

The subject is one which can be best dealt with by officers of the Public Works Department.

5. "Local Works" and "Relief Centres" are different names for practically the same thing. They are small works, managed by a Civil Officer distinct from the Public Works Department, at which gratuitous relief is given to persons incapable of working. They may also be defined as centres for gratuitous relief of wanderers to which a small local work is attached. I shall in future refer to them as Relief Centres.

The particular form of relief which is afforded at a Relief Centre does not seem to be contemplated in the Code. Nevertheless it is very necessary, because it is suitable for the class of people which is intermediate between those who should be expected to go to a work managed by the Public Works Department and those who should be given village-relief. If works under the Public Works Department could be established in such numbers that no village of the district would be more than 8 or at the most 12 miles from one of them, Relief Centres would not be necessary, but in practice it is impossible to do this, partly on account of the difficulty of finding plenty of suitable works to commence operations upon, and partly on account of the difficulty of finding men to act as Officers-in-charge and work agents It thus becomes necessary to establish small works in villages remote from large works.

The numbers on such works should be strictly limited, and should never exceed 1,000 and rarely exceed 500, and the workers in good condition should be periodically drafted on to the nearest Public Works.

The Relief Centre should be kept up chiefly for the sake of weakly labourers who are not strong enough to do a good day's work on a public work, and who are yet not so helpless as to deserve village-relief. The task exacted from them should be merely nominal, and one of the chief duties of the Officer-in-charge should be to give gratuitous relief to wanderers who arrived at the work in a starving condition until they can be drafted to the nearest poor-house.

6. There were no material deviations from the principles of the Code under the remaining heads of relief.

(B).—DEGREE OF SUCCESS WHICH HAS ATTENDED THE MEASURES ADOPTED, CONSIDERED PRIMARILY WITH REGARD TO THE RELIEF OF DISTRESS AND THE SAVING OF LIVES AND SECONDARILY WITH REGARD TO ECONOMY.

When I was in Mandla in September and October, the highest percentage of the population on relief was about 10. Mandla was one of the worst affected districts in the whole Province, and relief was on a very liberal scale. There were 6 works under the Public Works Department, 17 Local Works and about 50 kitchens, and village-relief had been extended so as to include all who had any claim to it whatever. I am of opinion that any further increase to the numbers in receipt of relief would have caused a waste of money. I therefore think that the number on relief in the worst month should not exceed 15 per cent. of the population at the most, and that usually it ought to be less than this.

I do not think that the number of persons relieved was ever larger than necessary either in Jabalpur or Mandla. Of course in both districts there was a small number of persons relieved who were not in need of relief, but these were principally people on village-relief. I remember once putting the mother of the village priest on the relief list; she was old and shrivelled in appearance, and unable to work, and the malguzar said that she had no one to support her. The malguzar's son was on bad terms with his father, and he told me that the old lady was one of the richest in the village.

It was always quite impossible to rely on the information given in the village as to the circumstances of the applicants for village-relief. As a rule the malguzars recommended nearly the whole village. The best test was the physical appearance of the paupers, and even this was unreliable in the case of very old people, as it was impossible to say whether their decrepitude had been caused entirely by age or partly by privation. In such cases a careful enquiry into the means of the family was essential. I do not think that any people were unnecessarily relieved on works or in poor-houses, because the institutions were not as a rule popular.

The principal class of people who ought to have been relieved and were not, were those who were not so weak as to be unable to go on to works and who yet refused to leave their villages. In some cases no doubt their obstinacy cost them their lives; under the best arrangements, it is not possible to have every village visited more than twice a month, and if a man who was really without resources was refused relief on the occasion of one visit, and refused to go to the nearest work as directed, it is quite possible that he should succumb before the village was visited again. I do not think that a single person would die of privation if he would only make the slightest efforts to avail himself of the relief which is at his doors. But as the abandonment of his cultivation for a whole year would very often cause a small cultivator to lose his *status* as such, and sink to the level of a field labourer, it is not surprising that he should prefer to stay in his village and face the worst.

The mortality in every district which was severely affected rose to nearly double the normal. I do not think that this could be avoided except by a very lavish use of village-relief, which would involve relieving every one at his own house whom an enquiry proved to be without resources.

The tendency is for all classes to stay in their villages as long as they possibly can, and when at last they make up their minds to go on to a relief work, they are probably in a weak state of health, which renders them very liable to cholera or dysentery or other bowel complaints. They are thus unable to digest the first good meal they get, and if cholera makes its appearance they fall easy victims to it.

I consider a combination of works and village-relief as sufficient in itself for all the purposes of famine relief. A due consideration of economy demands that no one should be relieved who is able, but refuses, to work, and all persons unable to work must receive gratuitous relief, and this is best given to them in their houses. In the Jabalpur District I think that very few people were ever put on the Village Register who were not entitled to gratuitous relief, and that the works which were opened there were quite sufficient to find employment for all who applied for it.

(C).—ADVICE AS TO THE MEASURES AND METHODS OF WORKING WHICH SEEM LIKELY TO PROVE MOST EFFECTIVE IN FUTURE IN THESE TWO RESPECTS.

The measure which I think is the most important in order to secure economy is that wages at Public Works should be paid in grain and not in cash. The Public Works Code lays down instructions for the procedure to be adopted in both cases, but during the last famine it was always the practice to pay in cash. It is an assured fact, which I think very few will question, that a great part of the money paid in wages was not spent by the workers.

During the rains the workers live to a great extent on *bhaji*, which is very unwholesome, and in Mandla, where there is a great deal of forest and large acres of waste land, the workers gather grass-seeds (*kodela, etc.*) for food, and save most of their earnings. The seeds are used as food even in a year of good harvest, and the Gonds use a special basket to collect them in when they are shaken out of the ear.

It is easy to ascertain the amount of money spent by the relief-workers by enquiring from the shop-keepers or contractor what the daily takings are. I have often made such enquiries, and in most cases have found that the amount spent on the work every day was considerably less than half the amount paid in wages. In a criminal case of theft which I had to try in Jabalpur District, it came out incidentally that a man had bought a bullock out of money saved on the work. In the months of November and December, when the famine was nearly over, and all the works had been closed, the Gonds in Mandla District admitted freely that they had saved most of their wages. The Gonds are a humorous tribe, and they used to laugh at the idea of having got the better of the Government. I think therefore that there is some reason to believe—

(1) that only a fraction of the money paid as wages is spent on food;

(2) that the workers save a good deal of their pay;

(3) that they live on unwholesome food when on the works.

If this is so, I think it would be very much better that the wages should be paid in grain, firstly, because the workers would keep in much better condition and fewer would die, and secondly, because the number on the works would be very much reduced, and this would cause a very considerable saving to Government.

The saving would be an economy which would not impair the efficacy of the works as a means of saving life, because it

Mr. W. N. Maw.

would only be the people who were not really in need of relief who would leave the works when payment in grain was commenced.

The suggestion which I consider second in importance is regarding kitchens. I think that it would both effect economy and cause a greater saving of life if kitchens were considered to be an integral part of village relief.

As soon as every village-relief was started, I should like to see orders passed that kitchens should be opened for the children, and that no child should receive relief in cash who lived in a village within 2 miles of a kitchen. I believe that the result would be that the children would be much better fed than if they were put on village relief, and at the same time I think that the cost of maintaining a kitchen for the children of four or five villages would be less than the expenditure which would be necessary if the children were given village-relief whenever the parents were so relieved. Natives are not so particular about their children eating with others of different castes as they are regarding themselves. I have sometimes seen Brahman children attending kitchens, and have very often seen children of other high castes.

I do not therefore think that kitchens failed in their object owing to the caste prejudices of the people: on the other hand, I think that they were the most successful of all the measures of relief. They were only started generally in August 1897: and I think that, considering how successful they were, it should be clearly laid down in the revised Famine Code that they should be started simultaneously with village-relief, and should be considered an integral part of the system.

(D).—OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS OR OPINIONS THOUGHT LIKELY TO BE USEFUL IN FUTURE FAMINES.

Question 121 refers to the necessity or desirability of inspecting or controlling officers having magisterial powers.

I had magisterial powers when on famine duty, and they were of great use to me on two distinct occasions. On the first I punished a Bania for selling short weight to the relief-workers: and on the second, I sent a gang muharrir to jail for keeping back part of the money which had been entrusted to him to pay to the workers.

Before taking up these cases, I had had frequent complaints of similar offences from the relief-workers: and in both cases the effect of the punishment was most salutary and immediate. I therefore think that all Famine Relief Officers in charge of relief circles should be given the powers of a 3rd Class Magistrate.

Written answers to the Commission's questions by MR. A. MAYNE, *Settlement Officer, Balaghat.*

Mr. A. Mayne.

*164 and 165. In this district any system of distribution of cooked food to adults, which does not provide for entirely separate cooking for many castes, has this serious defect, that most of the people refuse to avail themselves of it, preferring to die. Even members of many low castes will not eat food cooked by a person of high caste, if that person has cooked in the same vessels food for persons of other castes with whom the low caste man does not eat.

174. Nothing, save physical force, would have induced persons of the better castes or of respectable position to resort to the poor-houses for relief. Nor as a rule did starving persons of lower castes and classes resort to them—*vide* answers to Nos. 164 and 165, *supra*.

182. If it be desired to keep such classes alike, legal powers to send to, and detain at, poor-houses all beggars and starving wanderers are required. In this district no compulsion of this kind was systematically used. If the dread of the poor-house is to be removed, thorough arrangements for separate kitchens for most of the castes must be made and widely notified, and uncooked food must be issued to inmates belonging to castes of which the number of members is too small for a separate kitchen to be practicable.

184. The inmates were not allowed to leave by the front door of the poor-house or to climb publicly over the fence; but under cover of night or plea of a call of nature an escape could be effected by all save the very feeblest.

188. No system of relief-centres can serve as an efficient substitute for village relief in tracts suffering from acute famine.

200. As a rule the money has been spent on the proper object.

201. Of immense benefit. Much more money could have been advantageously spent. Thirty-one per cent. of the kharif area has had to be left unsown.

204. and 205. Such advances have not been made. I am of opinion that in this district the principle of making them is a sound one, and that *bonâ fide* cultivators requiring money for food should not invariably be required to submit to the so-called self-acting test of accepting work on a relief-work. The test is intended to discriminate between the really needy and those better off. But it does not always serve that purpose, and where it fails to be a true test of destitution, its action is injurious. Where the relief-work is situated sufficiently near the village for the agriculturists to attend it, and at the same time to keep an eye on their agricultural implements, cattle, houses and, where necessary, attend temporarily to their fields, the test is a good one for those castes who are not altogether averse to the kind of labour imposed at the relief-work. Thus Gond tenants in this district can be tested by earth-work; while Powar and Kunbi tenants will do cart work for a bare subsistence, but will not ordinarily do earth-work. If a labour test of earth-work or stone-breaking, etc., is imposed, they will not attend the relief-works until they have in many cases sold their cattle, carts and agricultural implements and lost position as agriculturalists. If the object of a labour test is to force a remnant of the cultivators of certain castes to take to kinds of work which many of them would rather sell their cattle and all that makes them of value to the community than take to, then the universality of a labour test is justified; but if it be required as above all things desirable that the tenant class should not break down, then some other test of need than that of an earth-work labour test is expedient in the case of the castes who are most valuable as cultivators and least efficient as labourers on relief-works. The possession of land, bullocks and agricultural implements should, coupled with undue leanness and the satisfactory result of local enquiries, be accepted in lieu of a labour test as giving a claim to relief in all cases in which labour cannot be provided, such as cart work, which will be taken advantage of.

Whether the sums given for subsistence are advances or gifts is a matter of detail, depending on the heaviness of the rental, previous arrears and other matters. But in any event money should be paid during acute famine to large numbers of agriculturalists without any labour being required of a kind which will leave the good cultivating castes outside the scope of a relief measure.

205. It is probably not directly more economical to the Government to make such payments to certain classes of distressed cultivators than to offer them work and wages; for the great economy to the Government in offering work in such cases arises from the fact that the offer is so frequently not accepted. As the primary object of famine is not economy to the Government, but the prevention of a collapse on the part of the distressed classes, the extra expense is not an objection, for the money thus laid out would be more efficiently expended than any other equal portion of the total famine outlay, since the class that would be kept from collapse is the most important in the community. Further, it is even possible that on account of the inefficiency of famine labour and the small extent to which the product of that labour is of direct service to Government, the support of distressed agriculturalists by the grant of allowances irrespective of a labour test, may prove *directly* more economical to Government than the employment of the same men on relief-works. I may mention that it will not usually be necessary to give the distressed tenants the same rate of allowance as they would obtain on the relief-works since they can generally earn something by odd jobs, cart

*The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

work and occasional agricultural employment, even in cases where it is impossible for them to obtain sufficient of such employment to provide unaided a bare subsistence.

I would further beg to mention that while such allowances to agriculturists should be confined at first to the good cultivating caste, and that only in tracts in which experience has shown that they will not come on to the relief-works in time to prevent breaking down, it is desirable that from the commencement of regular agricultural operations such allowances should be more liberally given, since the cultivator cannot with advantage then be made to comply with any other labour test than that of labouring in his own fields.

206. I should not suggest the grant to agriculturists of either gifts or loans to any extent beyond what their physical condition showed they were in urgent need of. The object of the measure is not to keep them in comfort, but to prevent privation increasing to such an extent as to lead to widespread agricultural deterioration. The extent to which the tenants are insufficiently fed can be roughly seen from a glance at their ribs. The arms and legs, too, tell their tale. There is no risk of many unfit persons being admitted as deserving this form of relief. I do not anticipate that the outlay under this head would be larger than would be necessary to provide for the subsistence of the same number of persons on the relief-works. The persons whom such a measure of relief is designed to provide for are of far more importance to the community and to the Government than are the lowest classes, wanderers, beggars and others for whose preservation large sums are expended.

214. I am averse to a general rule of this description. Where the failure of crop over a large area reduces the average outturn to 4 annas, immediate remission will in the case of many 'self cultivating' owners be preferable to suspension, but I do not think that it would do to depend solely upon the estimated outturn of the harvest of the village in deciding what relief to give it. Other considerations must be taken into account. Moreover, our estimates of outturns, though fairly reliable for a larger area, are not so accurate for each portion of that area.

215. The increase in private indebtedness has been considerable. I infer this general fact from the observation of detailed cases which have come before me. No statistics to hand. The borrowing and the renewing of old debts has in many cases been on a scale which must involve the ultimate ruin of the borrower.

222 to 224. In the statement of the 2nd object I would add the words 'after the expiry of the famine.' It appears to me desirable that Government should assume full responsibility for the maintenance of orphans *during* a famine.

225. Yes.

227. In a district such as this (Balaghat, Central Provinces), where communications are bad, trade is sluggish and capital scarce, such cheap grain shops are very necessary; and even in more advanced towns they are a legitimate method of relief.*

228. These shops interfere with private trade in so far as they provide for the needs of some persons out of whom the grain-dealers would have otherwise made large profits. The interference is legitimate.

Mr. A. Mayne.

We had a cheap grain shop at the district head-quarters. I bought 1,283 maunds of Rangoon rice and imported it during the hot weather. When the rains began, Balaghat was cut off from the railway by 27 miles of road with two unbridged rivers. We sold our rice to selected persons at reduced rates, and it is to this in a great measure that I attribute the fact that the price of rice at Balaghat town did not rise above 6½ seers to the rupee. The cost to the fund was ₹1,677. The money was well laid out.

230. The relief should be given at the commencement of the agricultural season, however great the distress. If it be not given then, its good results will be greatly diminished, for there will be a much larger area of fallow land and the distress will continue longer.

231. All classes who are in distress and who are likely to make good use of the grant.

232. Not if there are funds for takavi and the tenant is able to bear the burden of a fresh debt. Those who cannot get takavi should get priority if in other respects deserving.

233. Yes, if the tenant has no other resources.

235. We provided clothing and blankets at a cost of ₹10,318, gave cash allowances amounting to ₹1,66,038, imported and distributed ₹34,837 worth of rice for the subsistence of needy agriculturists, opened a cheap grain shop where 1,283 maunds of rice were sold, and imported and distributed ₹1,24,846 worth of rabi seed.

236.—

Object—I.—Clothing	3,139 persons.		
„ III.—Clothing	3,788	do.	
Pardanashins	7 families.		
Cheap grain-shop	210	do.	
„ IV.—Bullocks	600	do.	
Money for seed-grain	3,775	do.	24,487 families.
Money for food	6,857	do.	
Actual seed	10,000	do.	
Do. food	3,255	do.	

237. Clothing usually evoked the loudest gratitude.

238. The cheap grain shop did the greatest good at smallest cost.

239. Certainly, in a district where the position of the agriculturist is all important, and he is the one who gets least from the Government relief measures.

240. In this district the stock of rabi seed has been steadily dwindling. It has now been substantially replenished, thanks to our imports from Calcutta, Jabalpur and other distant parts The growing deterioration of the tract has thus been arrested. No grant of money could have attained the same results.

241. Approximately 32,000 acres of kharif and 40,000 acres of rabi land were sown with the help of the Fund.

Written answers to the Commission's questions by MR. J. B. MCNEILL, *District Engineer of the Saugor-Damoh Division, Saugor-Katni Extension, Indian Midland Railway.*

IV 1-B.—INTERFERENCE WITH THE SUPPLY OF LABOUR TO PRIVATE EMPLOYERS.

(*For employers of labour only.*)

† 140. Yes, anything within a radius of 10 miles affected our works.

141. No. We did not revise our rates, but contractors had to pay a great deal more for labour after relief-works were started in the districts than they did in the previous season; and our daily labour coolies, to whom we paid in former years 2½ annas, were got with the greatest difficulty at 3 annas 6 pies per diem.

142. Anything within a radius of 10 miles, particularly those started in Damoh and Patharia within ¼ mile of my works.

Mr. J. B. McNeill.

143. Yes; on several occasions in the Damoh District, and the Executive Engineer had a number of able-bodied men and women weeded out and sent back to our work.

144. We certainly could have employed a large number of people on our works, who could have earned good wages but who preferred the lighter work they got on relief-works.

145. Village and poor-house relief would have met the cases of those who were unable to work on the Railway; for all others there was ample work.

146. I am not prepared to say how this would have answered, as we do not employ labour departmentally. All our work is done through petty contractors. (*See paragraph 12 of Mr. Higham's Notes on Central Provinces.*)

147. No.

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* Here is an interesting passage from the Memoires de M. d'Artagnan, which has recently made such a success in France. (Volume III, Chapter XIII, page 194).

'Il y avait grande famine en France, les récoltes ayant manqué complètement. M. Colbert acheta des blés en Barbarie, que l'on engrangea dans le Louvre, et que l'on distribua à bas prix, afin de soulager la misère des particuliers qui mouraient de faim pour la plupart. Cela ne paraît pas grand'chose que trois ou quatre sous en plus ou en moins sur une livre de pain; mais de la cherte ou du bon marché de cette matière dépend le bonheur ou le malheur d'un Etat, car on ne saurait se passer de pain.'

† The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

Asstt.-Sur. G. Murphy.

Written statement of evidence by Assistant Surgeon G. MURPHY, *Civil Surgeon, Mandla, dated 17th February 1898.*

Two poor-houses were opened in this district and the average population gradually increased from 246 in January to 1,483 in August. Village-relief was extended to a large proportion of the inmates in September, and the numbers fell to 339 in October and 157 in December. The class of inmates was chiefly field labourers; weakly women and children especially availing themselves of this form of relief. Very few good caste people, and these only under extreme pressure of poverty and illness, claimed admission. Poor-house mortality was high from the beginning; and especially so during the monsoon months. The excessive death-rate was due to extreme emaciation, and dysentery from improper food. Local climatic conditions were responsible for an increased mortality during period from June to October.

As to poor-house.

The physical conditions of those received in poor-houses indicated very severe famine and a more or less general break-up of the poorer households throughout district.

The population of poor-houses was kept down by regular drafts of inmates, who had regained health and vitality, to local works. From August the system of sending them back to their villages, on village-relief, was carried out.

The ration prescribed by "Famine Code" was found generally insufficient and had to be supplemented by a small morning meal. Dieting was periodically varied and extras given to all weakly and sick persons.

Work was taken from a small portion of inmates; but with only partial success. Even domestic duties were very grudgingly performed.

Relief kitchens proved of great utility, especially benefiting children and sick or weakly people. The advantages obtained by opening them at many centres independent of relief-works were evident.

Relief kitchens.

It is certainly preferable to relieve non-working children and dependants by means of cooked food, distributed and eaten under supervision, as money given for the purpose is often misapplied.

The ratio of deaths per thousand of population in the district for the five years, period 1891—95, was as follows :—

Mortality.

District population according to census of 1891—339,373.

Ratio of deaths, 1891—95 :—

1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.
36·54	33·23	27·29	34·26	30·49

Ratio for 1896 and 1897 was :—

1896.	1897.
73·69	98·37

The higher ratio in both years 1896 and 1897 was due about equally to direct and indirect effects of scarcity.

Cholera and bowel disorders perhaps indicate the latter. A table giving ratio of deaths per thousand during period 1891—97 illustrates increase in mortality over that of average years as follows :—

Year.	Cholera. Total deaths.	Cholera. Ratio per 1,000 of population.	Bowel complaints. Total deaths.	Bowel complaints. Ratio per 1,000 of population.	All causes. Total deaths.	All causes. Ratio per 1,000 of population.
1891 . .	1,197	3·98	530	1·76	10,989	36 54
1892 . .	720	2·12	339	1·00	11,279	33·23
1893 . .	...	...	337	0·99	9,261	27·29
1894 . .	378	1·11	483	1·42	11,628	34·26
1895 . .	50	0·15	486	1·43	10,346	30·49
1896 . .	5,344	15·75	2,609	7·69	25,006	73·69
1897 . .	3,944	11·62	7,846	23·12	33,383	98·37

The excess mortality in this district during 1896-97 may very reasonably be attributed in full to scarcity. The dry months are always healthiest, and the influence of a concentrated and pernicious water-supply is usually more than counterbalanced by improved general health.

Cholera is certainly intensified and spread by the concentrated impurities in water during the dry season.

The mortality from bowel disorders was excessive and may be ascribed to insufficient and unwholesome food.

The scale of diet laid down by "Famine Code" for different classes of relief-workers may be improved. A small increase is essential, especially for diet of children.

Deaths from privation as given by Police numbered 240, but these were mostly beggars and wanderers. The mortality was greatest amongst the aged and young children. Neglect of infants by mothers was occasionally observed.

The staff of Medical Officers and subordinates was sufficient, and an adequate supply of medicines was always provided.

The food-grains used in poor-houses and in kitchens were rice, dhal, and wheat flour.

Ordinary food of people.

Three meals a day were given in the poor-houses as follows :—

Early morning	Wheat flour, 1 cht.	Gur, molasses, ¼ cht.	...	...
Midday .	Rice, 3 chts.	Dhâl, 1 cht.	Salt, ¼ cht.	Oil, ¼ cht.
Evening .	Atta or wheat flour, 4 chts.	Dhâl, 1 cht.	Vegetables, 2 chts.	...

Two meals were issued in kitchens attached to relief-works and one only in those under Police control.

Jail diet is compared with that of poor-houses and kitchens as follows :—

Particulars.	Jail.	Poor-Houses.	Kitchens.
	oz.	oz.	oz.
Atta	20	16	16
or			
Rice . . .	22	16	16
Dhâl . . .	4	2	2
Vegetables . . .	6	0	0
Oil	½	½	½
Condiments . . .	40 grs.	½	½

The diet in jail is larger, but task work is demanded.

Mr. Mathura Parshad.

Written statement of evidence by MR. MATHURA PARSHAD, *Pleader, Chhindwara.*

I am asked to draw up a note setting forth in writing my views on (1) the degree of success which has attended the measures adopted by Government during the recent famine, considered primarily with regard to the relief of distress and the saving of life, and, secondarily, with regard to economy; (2) the measures and methods of working which seem likely to prove most effective in future in these two respects; (3) other recommendations thought likely to be useful in future famines.

Although I was not directly connected with the famine administration in this district during the late famine, which was of no mean dimensions, I had the opportunity of know-

ing its magnitude, origin and the various measures adopted to relieve the sufferers. My chief source of information is derived from my own personal observation of the extent of distress and the means employed in alleviating its effects in the distressed area, coupled with such facts which I have been able to ascertain from respectable and influential private gentlemen with whom I came in contact in the discharge of my professional duties. In support of my conclusions herein recorded, and opinions expressed on the working of the relief operations, I cannot be expected to refer to official statistics, facts and figures which are not available to the public. I have, nevertheless, deduced certain propositions, given my opinion on certain measures of Government relief, laid down certain proposals and recommendations, and ventured to make some suggestions for the consideration of the Famine Commission, after a full and complete enquiry into the details of all branches of Famine administration, as observed by myself and ascertained from others.

Cause of famine.

2. By a notification, duly published in the local official *Gazette*, famine was formally declared in the Chhindwara tahsil of this district, although distress in more or less severe form was visible throughout the whole district. This may be traced to a succession of bad harvests for some years, coupled with the failure of crops for the previous year, and the complete failure in the year of general famine is mainly responsible for the appearance of the great famine last year. In spite of short crops in previous years, people managed, somehow or other, to keep their body and soul together, chiefly by borrowing money from the *sowkars* for ordinary expenses. But even these bankers, finding no apparent means of realizing their overdue debts, withheld the little pecuniary assistance which they used to give in former years. A combination of circumstances such as these rendered both agriculturists and non-agriculturists utterly helpless and powerless, and they had no other alternative but to eagerly look for Government assistance, which was no doubt extensively and generously given.

Relief operations.

3. Government relief operations were principally confined to jaghirs and other villages known to be in distressed state in the Chhindwara tahsil. These operations were, however, latterly extended to the Sausar tahsil as well, though to a limited extent. Relief to sufferers from famine was granted in one or other of the following modes:—

(1) Famine Relief-Works under P. W. Department or Civil Officers;

(2) Poor-houses and kitchens;

(3) Village Relief.

This was supplemented by gratuitous relief out of the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund, raised by the generous people of England and other parts of the world. This form of relief was limited to the four recognized objects of charity only, for which the Charitable Fund was organized under instructions from the Supreme Government.

Famine relief-works were opened under the direct superintendence of the P. W. Department at important centres of extreme distress in the Chhindwara tahsil. Private relief-works were also opened by big zamindars, with the help of sums advanced to them by Government on favourable conditions of repayments. Poor-houses and kitchens were opened, entirely at Government cost, at places likely to attract a large number of starving and infirm people coming from distant parts of the district. Every person expressing his willingness to be admitted into the poor-house was freely admitted. Village relief was extended to all villages in the Chhindwara tahsil (excluding the jaghirs) where distress was known to be most severe. This latter form of relief was ordinarily distributed through patwaris under the supervision of Revenue Inspectors.

Condition of the people before relief operations commenced.

4. Famine relief-works have been, in the opinion of the public, of the greatest assistance in relieving distress and the saving of life. I happened to pass through the distressed area of the Amarwara pargana in the month of December 1896, just a few days after relief-works on the Narsinghpur road were opened. Among the relief-workers I noticed a very considerable number of agriculturists and non-agriculturists of the labouring class, chiefly from the affected parts of the jaghirs and other surrounding villages. There were, of course some professional labourers from big towns in the district who were not so badly off for want of food as the agricultural class. The majority of persons employed on relief-works appeared to me very much reduced in strength and power to work on account of privation. They were wholly without proper clothes and not at all in a position to protect themselves and their children from exposure to cold and sun. I also observed, just about this time, the free wandering of a large body of starving and emaciated beggars who, not finding any suitable employment or other means of support, had taken up the profession of begging from door to door. These unfortunate victims of famine used to surround any traveller when they saw him cooking his food or taking his meals.

Children, whose parents had abandoned them for want of means to support them, were also seen in large numbers as mere skeletons. The horrible state of children was observed before any kitchen-houses for the reception and maintenance of such children were opened. The above facts, which have been stated without any exaggeration, and which will be probably borne out by official accounts, truly represent the extent and intensity of distress on the affected tract, as observed by myself during my first travel, just a little before or after the time when Government relief operations were opened. A fortnight after this, I again passed through the same tract on my return from Jabalpur, where I had been on some business. But this time I did not notice any appreciable change in the condition of the people suffering from famine, so largely employed on relief-works.

Condition of the people after relief was given.

5. Nearly three months after my last visit to the newly opened relief-works at Singhori and Amarwara, business took me to Amarwara *viâ* Singhori and thence to Dhanora and Batkagarh in the jaghirs. At Amarwara I stayed for four days and used to visit the relief camp close by almost daily. This time, I must frankly say that I found the condition of the relief workers entirely changed. Persons noticed by me on former occasions as being in a sickly and starving condition, showed at this time unmistakeable signs of improvement in their physical constitution, and seemed quite fit for employment on works. In fact, with the greatest difficulty I could pick out a few out of the large number of labourers who would appear to be exactly in the same state in which I found them only a short time before. On my way to Dhanora, from Amarwara, I passed through not less than half a dozen villages which, to my great astonishment, were wholly abandoned by villagers. On an enquiry being made, I found that they had either gone to the head-quarters of their jaghir (Dhanora) for labour, or joined the relief camps on the Narshinghpur road. Throughout my last journey from Chhindwara to Dhanora and Khapa—a distance of nearly 45 miles—I must admit that I did not find a single death from starvation, although I must have seen not less than twenty villages. This satisfactory state of things is solely attributable to the various measures undertaken by Government for the relief of distress in the district.

Management of relief-works.

Each relief camp was in charge of an officer not below the rank of a of a Naib-Tahsildar who, to the best of my information and knowledge, took all possible care and precaution to look after the comforts of labourers. On the whole the relief camps were managed in this district with great wisdom. Payment to relief workers was made almost daily. I received no complaints from them about the non-payment or short payment of their wages, although, without the knowledge of officers in charge of relief camps and their staff, I invited them to come forward and lay their complaints before me.

Management of poor-houses.

6. Larger number of poor-houses were opened in the jaghirs than in the *Khalsa* portion of the district, the reason being that in the former tract famine was more severe than in the latter area. Poor-houses were, as a rule, placed in charge of Superintendents. I visited not less than four poor-houses. Leaving aside certain minor defects of little or no consequence in the management, the treatment of inmates of the poor-houses was all that could be desired, and the management was conducted most efficiently. I came across certain inmates in the Chhindwara poor-house who expressed their desire to permanently live in the poor-house, if so allowed. Clothes were freely distributed in all poor-houses in the district solely at the expense of the Charitable Relief Fund, which has been most useful in clothing a large number of poverty-stricken persons, who would have otherwise succumbed to death from cold and exposure, if not from actual starvation.

Distribution of Village-relief.

7. Village-relief was allowed to all deserving persons in the distressed area, and this is one of the best and approved forms of relief extended to sufferers from famine in their own houses at less expense to Government. As the result of my

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private enquiry into the propriety of encouraging this kind of relief, I can safely lay down my opinion that people look upon this form of relief, which reaches them in their own houses, with great favour. They are satisfied with whatever sums they get to supplement their daily earnings in their own villages. But sufficient care and common sense should be exercised in preparing lists of persons entitled to this relief. If not, there is the risk of making ordinary persons of the labouring class lazy and indolent.

General success of relief operations.

8. So far as my knowledge of relief-works, its administrative control, management of poor-houses, kitchens and the distribution of village relief goes, I can safely assert, without any fear of contradiction, that the measures adopted by Government for the relief of distress in this district, have been eminently successful, not only in adequately relieving the suffering humanity from the effects of severe famine, but also in saving lives. When large famine relief works were thrown open for employment to all classes of persons known to be in distressed condition, and payment of their wages made to them almost daily, when any persons not able to work through some disease or bodily infirmity were drafted to poor-houses and there properly fed and taken care of, and when relief in suitable form was carried to such persons in their own villages who were not able to move about, it was impossible to conceive any deaths from pure starvation Of course, deaths from privation and starvation have occured in this district, but not after relief operations were commenced. Other powerful elements, such as exposure from cold, absence of proper medical treatment, and the like, may possibly have caused heavy mortality in certain parts of the district.

Economical aspect of relief operations in the District.

9. With regard to the economical aspect of the famine administration in this district, I have to say very little, because I have not had the means of knowing whether strict economy was observed in all cases of expenditure of public funds or not. But seeing that relief operations were conducted on such a gigantic scale, and having regard to the fact that the chief and primary object of Government and its officers, was "*to save life at any cost*," if there has been any extravagance in the expenditure at all, it is not to be very much regretted. Under these circumstances absolute prevention of waste of Government money seems to be quite impossible. If, however, all forms of relief had been made uncomfortable, and stricter conditions imposed on applicants for State Relief, then probably the expenditure would not have reached to such a limit, but deaths from starvation could not have been so remarkably prevented. The satisfaction that almost all measures of relief carried on in this district were attended with marked success is ample compensation for any waste of public money, which may have been occasioned through careless and negligent discharge of duties by an unscrupulous officer of no principle.

II.—Measures and Methods of working likely to prove most effective in future.

Sub-divisions of district into groups of villages for purposes of Famine administration.

10. When all the conditions necessary to establish the existence of severe distress or scarcity, which may eventually deepen into actual famine, are found to exist in any district or part of a district, the whole area supposed, or expected, to be visited by such a calamity should be divided into the following sub-divisions for purposes of Famine administration :—

(*a*) Villages or groups of villages in which the people, having regard to the barren nature of the soil of their fields, the non-fixity of their tenures, the importance of the crops grown and the physical character of the country inhabited by them, the absence of proper roads or other means of communication, are unable to sustain even the slightest shock of drought, scarcity or famine occasioned through some natural causes. (All the nine jaghirs of the district comprising not less than 528 villages, with a population of 60,000 souls at the last census, may be conveniently included in this class. Because these villages, or rather hamlets, are situated on high elevated lands covered with hills and mountains and, consequently, extensive cultivation of *rabi* crops is almost impossible. The agriculturists in the jaghirs have no credit with any bankers who cannot be supposed to advance them money in time of need, because their rights in land are untransferable.)

(*b*) Villages or groups of villages where *kharif* cultivation is carried on extensively, but *rabi* cultivation to a limited extent; where the people, even in ordinary times, are not so badly off as those of class (*a*); where the difficulties of transporting food-grain from the unaffected parts of the district would not be so great. (The whole of the Amarwara, Mohkhiar and Khamarpani parganas of this district can be included in this class).

(*c*) Villages, or groups of villages, which are more prosperous and more fertile than villages of class (*a*) and (*b*). In fact, villages not falling in any of the last two classes, should be included in this class.

After making the sub-divisions of a district on the lines indicated above, famine relief operations should be commenced in order of urgency. That is to say, whenever reasonable grounds for supposing the probable existence of severe distress appear to the entire satisfaction of the District Officer, the various relief operations prescribed by the Famine Code should be commenced in villages of the (*a*) class on a small scale, with the first indication of distress. Such operations may be further extended, curtailed or strengthened, according to the development of events and change in the circumstances of the locality. If no other relief operations are possible to be started at once, then arrangements to open poor-houses and kitchens at least, should be made as soon as the probable apprehension of distress or scarcity is felt, because experience has shown that much time is lost in preparing plans of relief operations, suggesting measures and methods of relief, and in obtaining the necessary sanction. Relief in villages of class (*b*) and (*c*) may be distributed after going through the preliminary procedure provided in the Famine Code.

Substitution of petty relief-works for large works.

11. Instead of opening one or two large Relief Works for the whole tahsil or a district, I consider it more advantageous and proper to open petty relief works in larger numbers, which is the only method of giving relief to persons of the labouring class nearer their own homes. The cost of maintaining the works will probably be the same, but the cost of establishment will be increased and some additional expenditure will have to be incurred in their management and supervision. But any money so spent will be compensated by the curtailment of the following expenses which Government has to bear by opening and maintaining large Relief Works :—

(*a*) Relief-workers will find it more convenient to return to their respective villages after the day's work, and, consequently, there will be no necessity for the erection of temporary tiled huts and other structures of building for their comforts and lodging. This will effect considerable savings.

(*b*) Number of persons to be brought on the Register of Village Relief will be much decreased.

One of the greatest advantages which the labouring agricultural class is likely to get thereby will be that they will be able to look after their own affairs and take care of their own property in the villages—an object which they will not be able to achieve if they are forced to join relief-works at long distances from their villages.

Appropriate relief-works.

12. Construction of new roads, improvement of existing roads in class, and collecting materials for the future maintenance of metalled as well as unmetalled roads, are the most suitable and appropriate forms of Public Works likely to be of permanent beneficial enjoyment to the country, and should therefore be included in the programme of future relief-works. There are many drawbacks, obstacles and disadvantages in including other works in the programme, such as digging of wells and tanks, embankment of fields or clearing of waste land for cultivation, as they are not calculated to confer any lasting benefit on the people of other villages.

Works which should be included in the future programme of this District.

13. In the event of any future famine occurring in this district, I would put down the following works in the programme of relief-works which should be opened first as "*Test Works*" and subsequently converted into regular Famine Relief Works at a moment's notice,

in case of any necessity arising for such a step being taken :—

(*a*) For the Amarwara pargana, the Harrai and Sonepur jaghirs :—improvement in class, of the Chhindwara-Narsinghpur Road, construction of which has been undertaken during the recent famine.

(*b*) For the Sonepur, Batka, Pagara and Harrai jaghirs :—construction of a road direct from Harrai to Pagara or some point on the Matkuli road.

(*c*) For parts of the Pagara and Pachmarhi and other jaghirs :—improvement of the Chhindwara-Matkuli road ; collection of *muram* and breaking of metal which will be of great future use in metalling the road.

(*d*) For Chowrai and Chand pargana :—metal-breaking and collection of *muram* on the Seoni-Chhindwara road, and if possible, laying out and constructing a new road from Chowri to Amarwara, both being trading towns of some importance.

(*e*) For Mohkhair and Omraith pargana :—improvement of the present Nagpur road and the construction of the half-finished Betul road *vid* Mohkhair.

(*f*) Sausar Tahsil :—improvement of the present Nagpur road, Pandhurna-Betul road and the construction of a new road from Sausar to Pandhurna *vid* Mohgaon and Pandhrakhedi.

This list is only illustrative and not exhaustive. As this district is still in a very backward state, and one of its urgent and most pressing needs is the improved means of communication and the opening of new roads from one important commercial town to another, no better selection of relief works of general utility can be made. As this programme includes the construction and improvement of certains roads in the interior of the district, the available balance of the Local Fund may be safely utilized in opening the proposed relief-works in famine time. Moreover paragraph 18 of the Central Provinces Famine Code clearly lays down that District Councils are the primary agency available for coping with famine, and must be expected in such cases to direct their whole resources, subject only to maintenance of absolutely necessary works in non-affected tracts, to affording relief.

14. The position which an officer-in-charge of Famine relief works holds is such an important and responsible one that I would like to recommend a substantial increase in his pay, which should not be less than R100 per month, and the officer should not occupy a lower rank than that of a Tahsildar or Munsiff. This will secure honest work and ensure the conscientious discharge of the very arduous work which the said officer is required to perform. Respectable and educated men will readily come forward to fill these posts with increased pay.

Raising the pay and status of officers in charge of relief-works.

An assistant to help the officer-in-charge should also be employed in cases of large works on a salary of R40 to R50.

15. The system of payment of wages to famine-relief labourers adopted on the Narsinghpur road whereby a nominal roll or register of labourers is not required to be kept, should be put a stop to, as wholly mischievous and utterly unsuitable to the circumstances of the district. No proper check or control can be exercised over the doings of low paid subordinate officials, if the system of making payments to relief workers without registering their names and other particulars necessary for their proper identification is allowed to remain in force, or else we will have to depend entirely on the good-will and honesty of gang muharrirs who are generally recruited from a class of low paid and half-educated clerks whose honesty and straightforwardness cannot be easily depended upon. But if, on the other hand, the discontinuance of this practice is not considered practicable and the maintenance of muster rolls not thought advisable, then I would recommend that payment of wages should invariably and in all cases be made by officers in charge of relief-works themselves or their assistants. Because the gang muharrirs cannot be safely trusted for this work.

Present system of payment of wages to relief workers condemned.

16. Payment of wages to relief-workers should, as a rule, be made in the beginning daily. But as the labourers establish themselves in the relief camp, secure credit with the banias, or otherwise may be considered capable of maintaining themselves and their dependents, if payment of wages is delayed for a couple of days, the daily payment should be stopped and the system of making payment twice or thrice a week should be gradually but steadily introduced.

Payment of wages to be made daily in the beginning.

17. Relief-works and poor-houses should not be opened without a dispensary and a special Hospital Assistant attached to them. I have seen myself that the Chhindwara poor-house was not for a long time put in charge of a special Hospital Assistant, but the Hospital Assistant of the Main Dispensary was directed to look after the sanitary arrangements and medical treatment of the inmates of the poor-house in addition to his own duties. This arrangement put the public of Chhindwara town to great inconvenience and much hardship. Out-door patients had to wait at the Dispensary for hours together before they could obtain any medical treatment or advice from the Hospital Assistant, because the poor-house was nearly a mile off from the town dispensary. The same thing I observed at the two relief camps on the Narsinghpur road, when the Dispensary in charge of only one Hospital Assistant was located at Amarwara, and was intended for both the camps. One medical officer had to look after the health of 150 inmates of the poor-house at Amarwara, and nearly 7,000 relief workers on the two camps, which were separated by a distance of nearly 8 miles. Besides this, he had to supervise the preparation of food administered to children in the kitchens. It is impossible for a single hand to pay due attention to so many important things. This is extremely undesirable, and steps should be taken in future famines to remedy the defect.

Dispensary and a Medical Officer indispensable for poor-houses and relief camps.

18. Poor-houses should be opened at centres of extreme distress so as to make it easy for any anxious applicant to ask for and obtain the relief necessary for his subsistence. In this district, excluding the jaghirs comprising nearly 523 villages, only two poor-houses were opened and two more for the remaining part of the Chhindwara tahsil containing 900 villages. I have noticed myself that people feel most reluctant in travelling long distances simply in order to join a poor-house.

Suitable places for poor-houses.

Poor-houses should, therefore, be opened at the headquarters of each important Police station house to be managed by local Police officers. If the opening of a poor-house at any Police station house be considered impracticable or inconvenient, then arrangements to distribute cooked food to all wanderers and paupers should be made under the personal superintendence of the Police officers.

19. As far as circumstances permit, paid Brahmin cooks should be employed in all regularly established poor-houses. This will make the institution more popular and attractive. Experience has shown that fear of losing caste is one of the important and most powerful considerations which have a strong tendency to keep back many persons from joining the poor-house, though they may be actually starving.

Necessity for employing Brahmin cooks in poor-houses.

20. Kitchens for young children should not be opened at each and every place where relief-works are in progress, unless and until it is clearly made to appear that parents will rather starve their children to death than feed them with additional amount of wages which they get for the express purpose of maintaining their children. I am opposed to the idea of opening kitchens for the reception and maintenance of relief-workers' children for the following reasons :—

Kitchens for children on relief-works not encouraged.

(*a*) It involves a lot of expenditure without return of any corresponding gain or advantage ;

(*b*) Parents are most unwilling to send their children of tender age to kitchen-houses in charge of strangers or outsiders ;

(*c*) There will be very few hard-hearted parents who will allow their children to perish for want of food ;

(*d*) When children are removed either with or without the consent of their parents to a kitchen, not ordinarily situated close by, the parents feel much anxiety for the safety of their young ones, and consequently are less inclined to work till their children come back ;

(*e*) The anxiety of the parents becomes so great by the temporary absence of their children, that

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most of them follow their children, and often remain present during the whole time the children are fed, much to the detriment of their work.

(*f*) Children are generally without clothes, they have to travel on foot almost naked from two to three miles exposing themselves to cold and the inclemency of weather;

(*g*) In the absence of strict medical supervision which is not always possible, there can be no sufficient guarantee for the diet administered to them being wholesome and healthy.

(*h*) There being no distinction of caste in the kitchens, labourers of the middle class, such as *Lodhis, Kunbis, Raghubansis*, etc., will not allow their children to be mixed and fed along with the boys of low castes, such as *Gonds, Bharyas, Dhers* and *Mangs*;

(*i*) Children are often required to wait at the kitchens for some time before food is administered to them, however efficient the management may be;

(*j*) There is every possibility of money spent on the maintenance of kitchens being wasted. Ordinarily cooked food may be prepared for an estimated number of hundred children, but if fifty only out of this number turn up, the food prepared for the remaining fifty will have to be thrown away.

Children's kitchens to be opened in certain cases.

21. If, however, the special circumstances of any locality necessitate the opening of kitchens for any specified area, then one kitchen for the whole relief camp at a permanent place should not be opened, but arrangements should be made for starting temporary kitchens for every two or three gangs with the object of feeding the children of these gangs only, and as the relief-work goes on progressing, labourers move on, kitchens should also be shifted. This will not involve long travelling on the part of the young children, for they can be fed within the easy reach of their parents, who will have no objection in allowing their boys to be fed, nourished and properly taken care of, within their sight.

Kitchens to be attached to poor-houses.

22. With regard to the opening of kitchens in villages where there are no relief works, I desire to express the same opinion which I have expressed in the last preceding paragraph of this note. Of course, to every poor-house should be attached a kitchen, where children not only of the inmates of the poor-house, but also those belonging to other surrounding villages, should be fed who may come uninvited of their own accord to receive cooked food. After they are fed, or cooked food given them, they should be allowed to return to their own villages.

Poor-houses to be put in charge of special officers.

23. Every poor-house should be put, as far as possible, in charge of a special officer as Superintendent. This important duty should not be assigned, except for very grave reasons, to an official in addition to his other duties. The Superintendent of a poor-house may, if circumstances will permit of this being done, be provided with free quarters within the precincts of the poor-house, because the duties of Superintendent are such as would require a constant supervision on his part over the work of his subordinates. This will prevent wasteful expenditure of public money which may otherwise be occasioned during his absence. Moreover, his immediate presence in the poor-house at all hours of the day will be a sufficient guarantee of the care and attention which he is supposed to pay to the health, comfort, and convenience of the inmates of the institution.

Persons to be included in the register of village relief.

24. When preparing registers of persons entitled to be relieved at their own houses, the assistance of the malguzar and other respectable residents of the village should be obtained. All *parda nashin* females and other respectable paupers who are entitled to gratuitous relief under Object III of the four objects of charity for which, under orders of the Government of India, a charitable relief fund is to be raised, should be included in the first instance. If the charitable fund is in existence and sufficient to relieve such persons, the expenditure incurred on the relief on this class should be debited to that fund. But if the fund is not in a position to bear this expenditure, the entire cost should be borne by Government. After including the names of such persons in the register of village-relief, steps should be taken to ascertain and register the names of persons who cannot join poor-houses, and are not fit for employment on relief works through some reasonable cause.

House-to-house relief should be generally distributed in cash.

25. House-to-house relief should, as a rule, be distributed in cash as was done in this district where the system has proved a complete success, because people manage, somehow or other, to procure food-grain with the help of the small allowance which they receive from Government. Departure from this rule should be made only in cases in which the situation of the distressed area, and other natural causes, will prevent the free transport of grain from other places.

Intervals at which payments to recipients of village relief should be made.

26. Payments to recipients of this form of relief may be made weekly or once in a fortnight. I was in charge of distribution of relief to respectable poor in the town of Chhindwara, under Object III, out of the Charitable Relief Fund, and I used to make payments monthly, but received no complaints against the adoption of such a system. Care should, however, be taken to pay them in advance for the coming month and not at the close of the month. Thus, payment for the month of January may be made in the first few days of the month. This system, if brought into force, will save both time and the cost of extra establishment. But there are cases in which payments should be made once or even twice a week. For instance, in any village in which larger number of crippled, blind and infirm persons are on the register of village-relief, payment should be made to them more frequently.

Appointment of special officer to supervise and control the distribution of village-relief.

27. In any district, or part of a district, in which the extensive distribution of house-to-house relief is considered absolutely necessary, I would suggest the appointment of a special officer, not below the rank of a Naib-Tahsildar, who should be entrusted with the work of supervising the distribution of relief by Patwaris; because without proper control and strict supervision over the conduct of Patwaris, complete immunity from starvation cannot be secured, which is the chief object of Government. Of course, Tahsildars and their Naibs are expected to do this important work, but the numerous duties of a more or less important character, which they are required to perform, prevent them from devoting so much time and attention which a special officer is sure to do.

III.—Other Recommendations likely to be useful in future Famines.

Definition of "District Authority."

28. The term "*District Authority*", according to its definition as contained in the Famine Code, means the Deputy Commissioner of the district, either acting alone or in concert with local committees or local bodies as the Local Government may determine. But the Chief Commissioner of these Provinces has not yet determined as to what local committees or local bodies shall be associated with the Deputy Commissioner for the proper administration of Famine Relief. The Government of India, on the recommendation of the Famine Commission, have fully recognized the valuable assistance which can always be obtained from influential leading men possessing a thorough knowledge of local affairs. It will be a very wise act on the part of a District Officer to welcome information, suggestions, and proposals from private gentlemen in all matters appertaining to the mitigation of suffering and alleviation of distress in his district. I am, therefore, clearly of opinion, as the Government of India have also laid down, that intelligent and leading men of the district should be invited to assist the District Officer in providing information and investigating the condition of the poorer classes, and also in superintending the administration of Famine Relief. This rule, of course, should not be universally applied to all districts, but to such districts only in the Central Provinces in which a sufficient number of private leading gentlemen are forthcoming, and will gladly volunteer their services. But the District Officer should be regarded as the responsible head and director of all relief operations within his district. He shall not be bound to conform to, or follow, the opinion of gentlemen invited to assist him.

Organization of private charity.

29. As soon as famine is formally declared in any district, or reasonable apprehension of severe distress or scarcity, which may ultimately deepen into famine, is felt, the District Officer should consider himself bound to stimulate and encourage private charity, and, if possible,

organize a charitable relief fund, under the control of a district committee of which he himself should be the *ex-officio* chairman. Practical results and past experience have shown that much good and useful work can be done through private charity, if organised systematically and methodically, and in the event of such an institution being unnecessarily delayed, disastrous consequences are sure to ensue. Government only assumes the responsibility of saving life by all the available means in its power, and private subscriptions so raised are certainly not intended to be spent in the performance of this duty, but they are designed to meet certain charges and to provide certain requirements and extra comforts which are absolutely necessary for the preservation of life. For instance, cold is not so severe in any other district in the whole province as in this district, and if Government simply provides relief-works for the famine-stricken by paying their subsistence wages, which is sufficient for the bare maintenance of their dependents, without allowing them a sufficient margin for clothes and other necessaries of life, mortality from cold and exposure will be as high as from sheer want of food. When I visited the famine relief-works on the Narsinghpur road in the month of December 1896, I came across hundreds of labourers, both males and females, with their little young ones who were almost naked and without any clothes on their body. In the absence of any properly organized system of private charity, the unfortunate men had to remain in this condition till the beginning of the rains, and I daresay that in the jaghirs, and particularly at the Tamiya relief camp, many deaths must have occurred from cold only. So was the case with the inmates of the poor-houses and recipients of other forms of Government relief. The necessity for clothes arises as soon as the distress is felt, and people in this part of the district attach more value to gifts of clothes than to any other form of relief. In my own district nearly ₹90,000 were received out of the Charitable Relief Fund and not less than ₹20,000, or nearly one-fourth of the total remittance, was spent on clothes. I would therefore strongly recommend that private charity should be organized in each district and worked side by side with Government relief operations. In every district there will be found a certain number of kind-hearted and well-to-do gentlemen who would be most willing to subscribe to the Fund, either in a lump sum or by way of monthly subscriptions, provided that an institution exists which will undertake the proper expenditure of all sums raised locally. It is distinctly laid down in paragraph 187, of the Famine Commission Report, that something may still be done towards supplementing the subsistence-ration of Government with small comforts, specially in the case of hospital patients, etc., etc., and that any charitable assistance of this kind should be welcomed and encouraged. There is no reason why this recommendation should not be followed.

30. With the object of subjecting relief operations to a more careful scrutiny and supervision, I would recommend that Divisional Commissioners should be empowered to appoint one or more non-official gentlemen of influence and respectability as visitors, who will go on inspecting any relief operation which comes in their way, prepare a memorandum containing the result of their inspection and observation, and submit it to the District authority for information. They will be at liberty to make any suggestions they choose for the more efficient working of the relief measures. They will bring to the notice of the District authority any careless or defective management on the part of Relieving Officers, and will also be in a position to hear the complaints and grievances of relief workers which may be lodged before them. Since the Government has more than once recognised the value of co-operation and help obtained from private leading men in all matters connected with the efficient administration of famine relief, I think there is no harm in giving them more scope for out-door work. They will be able to hear and bring to the notice of the proper authorities complaints and grievances which official visitors are not in a position to know; they will examine minutely the real condition of the poorest; they would find out whether there are any deserving persons in the village who have applied for relief but not obtained it; they would widely make known the places where relief is freely offered by Government.

Appointment of non-officials as visitors to relief operations.

31. It is admitted on all hands that the class which suffers most during famine is the non-agricultural labouring class, including weavers of coarse country cloth, spinners of thread, artizans, such as goldsmiths, blacksmiths, carpenters, etc., whose business is completely stopped by reason of the prevailing distress and high prices of food-grains in the local markets. While the unusually high rates of food-grains are not solely due to the failure of crops, but to a great extent attributable to some external causes; among these may be included the combination of grain dealers not to sell grain in their possession below a certain standard, the difficulty of the transport of grain from outside or non-affected areas in the district during the rains. It is, therefore, with the main object of putting down these external causes, that I would propose the opening and maintenance of cheap grain shops in all important towns and villages with a considerable non-agricultural population. This duty should legitimately be discharged with the assistance of private charitable funds. But in districts, or parts of districts, in which the insufficiency of the fund will debar the public from undertaking this work, I would suggest that Government should take charge of these institutions. My own personal experience has shown that a cheap grain shop is one of the most approved and suitable modes of relief reached to a very large number of persons who would otherwise seriously feel the pinch of distress. I was Honorary Secretary of the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund District Committee for this district, and in this capacity I had full opportunity of knowing whether relief in shape of money grants is more appreciated by the people than relief in shape of reduced price of grain. The former relief was decidedly preferred as more suitable. Only one cheap grain shop was opened by the District Committee for the town of Chhindwara, and was put directly in my charge. The shop was opened on 3rd July 1897 and closed on 15th October 1897. The total loss sustained by the Committee was nearly ₹1,800. Not less than 774 ticket-holders, representing so many families comprising 3,117 members, were relieved at the cheap grain shop. Before the shop was opened the District Committee sanctioned a monthly expenditure of ₹600 for the relief of persons under object III, which was hardly sufficient to grant adequate relief to even 200 families. The introduction of the grain shop not only relieved a much larger number of persons, but it indirectly benefited all residents in town and neighbourhood of Chhindwara. The cheap grain shop here had the remarkable effect in reducing the artificially high prices of food-grain, which the local banias had fixed. In the event of any such shop being opened by the Government it will not be necessary to interfere with the ordinary trade, nor will it be necessary to purchase and store large quantities of grain in their godown; but tenders for the supply of small quantities should be invited and no difficulty will be experienced in purchasing grain in the open market at the current rate.

Cheap grain shops.

I give the following extract from my report to the Provincial Committee, Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund, Nagpur, on the working of the grain shop which was maintained here for nearly three months. In fact, I considered the subject so fully that I am prepared to meet satisfactorily any objections which may be entertained against the adoption of this form of relief:—"In the middle of June the continued rise in the prices of wheat, juar, and other staple food-grains led the Committee to believe that the time had come to start a cheap grain shop in the town of Chhindwara, with the object of increasing the purchasing power of the wages earned by the labouring and artizan classes of the town, who though not actually thrown out of employment found it difficult to support their families at the prevailing high rates. The matter was considered at a meeting held on 1st July 1897, and the shop started on 3rd July. At first it was proposed to give some *bania* a contract to sell grain to ticket-holders at a fixed rate; the difference between the market rate and the rate at which he would sell, was agreed to be paid to him, together with a small percentage of commission for his trouble, and other clerical work which he might be required to do. But the percentage of commission demanded was too high to warrant the adoption of this system.

Evidence that there was a combination among *banias* to maintain the artificially high rates decided the Committee not to place the management of the shop in the hand of a member of the class. It was eventually resolved to open a shop under direct management.

The following establishment was maintained for the purpose:—

(1) a Manager on ₹25 a month;

(2) a Writer on ₹10 a month to keep accounts;

(3) three weighmen, each on ₹4 per month;

(4) one chowkidar on ₹5 per month;

The appointment of a special Manager to supervise the selling and purchasing of grain was considered necessary

Mr. Mathura Parshad.

. . . Anticipating the difficulties of transport in the rains, the *Bakkals* had combined to maintain the price of grain at the artificially high rate of R28 a *khandi*, in spite of the fact that they had large stocks in their hands. The opening of the grain shop forced them to lower their rates to a reasonable level. On the grain shop selling at the rate 22½ rupees a *khandi* the market price fell to R23, and finally to *R20* which was the fair price. This was not arrived at without a struggle. The grain shop was boycotted by the *banias* and the Committee was forced to purchase direct from malguzars. Grain shops should, during famine time, be opened at the head-quarters of every district or tahsil in the first instance, and gradually extended to other important places known to possess a sufficiently large number of persons of the labouring class. If opinions of experts and other persons, who had something to do with the opening and maintenance of grain-shops in the country during the recent famine, be collected on the subject and properly considered, I doubtless hope that the utility of this institution will be fully realized.

Written answers to the Commission's questions by ASSISTANT SURGEON J. PRENTIE, *Civil Surgeon, Bhandara.*

RELIEF-WORKS.

Asstt. Surg. J. Prentie.

*97 and 98. Children below 7 years should not be expected to work. They should invariably be fed at kitchens, one of these being attached to each group of five gangs under the Gang Muharrir.

In the beginning of operations only one central kitchen was established on each work. I found very few children being fed, and the parents full of objections on the score of caste. The children receiving money (of the class under 7 years) were in most deplorable condition. When each Gang Muharrir had his own kitchen, they were crowded with children whose condition became normal in two months. The real difficulty had been the great distance between places where the gangs bivouac and the central kitchen—often miles.

Nursing mothers should be allowed a small extra money payment in addition to a little liquid food from the kitchens for their babes, otherwise both suffer, it being the custom of Natives to partly suckle their children to about three years. Hospital Assistant to certify that they are actually nursing.

Very great supervision is required to prevent fraud.

103. One day's rest should be allowed in the week: this should be Sunday. On works where this was not allowed, the people fell into the most dreadful condition of filth, vermin and skin disease. All complained bitterly that they had no time to clean themselves and wash clothing.

118. I would suggest the employment of selected Non-Commissioned Officers from the Army, Europeans having more sympathy with distress than ordinary Native officials, who cannot divest themselves of caste prejudice. No ordinary Native has the sense of duty and responsibility for lives entrusted to him required in a case of this kind.

124. My experience is that all classes of workers prefer daily payments. Complaints of cheating by contractors were very frequent after system of daily payments was stopped.

130. Yes. See reply to Questions 97 and 98. If money is given, less nutritious food is purchased by the parents and the children suffer; or it is misused by them, the children remaining in an emaciated state for long periods. At the kitchens the improvement is wonderful. The most constant supervision is required to prevent fraud. Only nursing mothers to receive a small cash payment, but even in these cases their nurslings should not be prevented eating a little at the kitchens if under 3 years of age.

Caste rules do not apply to children under 6 or 7 years.

HUTTING.

In making a road the people are spread out for several miles on either side of the central camp. I consider that much hardship and exposure would have been prevented by provision of hutting on each section instead of only at the central camp.

WATER-SUPPLY.

The main sources should be under guard day and night. During the hot weather a certain amount per head should be supplied to workers on the line of road.

POOR-HOUSES.

172. The highest population of poor-houses in this district was 977 during August. The number fluctuated between 827 and the maximum from 13th March to 25th September. Average for the whole year 737.

178. The lower Hindu castes, "Gowarra," "Injhewar," "Marar," "Powar," "Koshtis," "Lodhis," "Halbas," "Kalars," also Gonds and the lowest class "Mahars."

174. There was very great objection. No amount of pressure could have induced them. The mere fact of eating food cooked by the poor-house staff, although these were Brahmins, placed its inmates out of caste. In exceptional cases where persons suffering from starvation refused to enter the poor-house, they were supplied with dry food and allowed to cook for themselves as long as they were able to do so.

175. My experience was in Madras 1877-78. I think that the people here were much more reluctant to accept poor-house relief. This may be due to longer duration and greater severity of the Madras famine, to larger number of the lowest castes in that Presidency, and in some measure to unusually strict caste rules of the lower Hindu classes in these Provinces.

176. The monthly death-rate at all poor-houses throughout the year was at the rate of 17·11 per cent. of average strength. During the five months May to September the average was 21 per cent. The highest at any poor-house up to end of September was 38 per cent. After September village relief was more extended, only persons unfit to travel to their villages being retained in poor-houses. The mortality among these, at one poor-house (Gondia), rose to 53 and 54 per cent. of strength in October and November. The increase of mortality from May to September was due partly to increasing distress, stricter application of the rules on relief-works, and also unfavourable climatic conditions. During the rains the people were much exposed, and, being insufficiently clad, suffered greatly.

177. For the first few months of the famine the poor-houses contained quite 40 per cent. of persons belonging to the Balaghat District. Not more than half a dozen individuals belonged to Native States, with a small number from Raipur and Sconi districts.

178. Whole families came from the Balaghat District, but in Bhandara poor-house inmates were chiefly the aged, infirm, beggars, orphans, distant relatives that their families could not support as heretofore, with a number of "Koshtis" (weavers) who were unfit to do road work. The physical condition of these people was as bad as I have seen in the Madras famine.

179. Up to September, only inmates fit for relief works were drafted from the poor-houses regularly. After this persons permanently infirm or unlikely to be soon fit for work were returned to their villages and placed on the village relief list.

180. If it be taken into consideration that all inmates are more or less reduced by starvation, it must be admitted that the ration allowed is insufficient for them to speedily recover.

In poor-houses of this district it was found necessary to allow an early morning meal in addition to that laid down in the Famine Code, consisting of two ounces gram flour with a small quantity of "gur" or salt made into gruel. The amount of oil had to be raised to half ounce per adult daily. Salt increased also to half ounce. Vegetables to two ounces. When vegetables were not procurable, curdled milk "dahi" was issued instead. When this proved insufficient, meat, two ounces, was issued every second day at the expense of the Charitable Fund. The amount of spices was found altogether inadequate and had to be increased.

In addition to the above, the grain used had to be varied regularly, as it was found that the weakly population wearied of the monotonous food supplied.

All persons whose condition was considered bad were admitted to hospital and placed on special diet. Those very ill, suffering from bowel disease, received only liquid food—hot sago and milk, with strong soup—alternately every three

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

hours at fixed times day and night. Weakly persons were fed less often and allowed a small quantity of rice cooked in "ghee," until discharged.

The craving for meat and fish by all emaciated persons was very great, and should, I consider, be regarded as a physiological demand. There was considerable improvement in general health after its issue.

181. I would make the following suggestions:—

(1) *Construction.*

Standard plans and estimates should be kept ready in each district, rates being revised every 5 or 10 years.

For want of these much additional expense was incurred.

Each shed should stand by itself in a separate compartment and not built round the outer wall as in Famine Code; the advantages of this are better light, ventilation, easier to clean, less damage in case of fire.

Fire a great danger. Each shed should have a fire ladder hung in a prominent place, and supply of water stored in kerosine oil tins. Several small fires were at once extinguished in this district by these precautions.

All shed walls should be wattle and daub with doorways every 5 feet.

Roofs should, wherever possible, be tiled, the expense of this is somewhat greater than thatch, but is more economical in the end in not requiring repairs.

Each compartment in the poor-house to have its own latrine, bathing place and drinking water-supply. Two gates, one leading to the central enclosure and offices, the other to be opened in case of fire.

(2) *Establishment.*

The Famine Code scale was found quite insufficient. No reliance could be placed on pauper servants. All had to be watched by paid establishment.

I consider the following staff necessary:—

1 Superintendent (a European, if possible, pensioned Sergeant or Police Inspector).

1 Store-keeper and Clerk.

1 Clerk, if population rises over 500.

1 School teacher to 50 children.

1 Head cook.

1 Head-warder.

3 Warders to each 100 paupers.

1 Head-sweeper.

1 Sweeper to each latrine.

2 Sweepers to each 100 paupers for removal of sewage and general duties

The gate-keepers should be Police, under a Head-Constable, who should live in a guard-room near the main gate.

At night the Police should be responsible that a warder is on duty in each shed, otherwise paupers make fires and endanger their lives.

Paid warders are absolutely necessary for supervision of paupers day and night.

PAUPER SERVANTS.

No scale can be laid down, as the number depends on the strength and capability of performing work. As they become robust are sent of to relief-works.

Cooks.	Water-carriers.
Grinding women.	Orderlies.
Wood-cutters.	Yard gate-keepers.
Washermen.	Godown Assistants.
Sick attendants.	Water-guards.
Children's attendants.	Grave-diggers.

All to receive R1 monthly in addition to food.

All menial establishment, both pauper and paid, to be provided with distinctive badges or belts.

Drinking water to be kept in closed barrels with stops. Water-supply should be always out-side the poor-house and under guard day and night. A "piau" to be made in each yard with attendant. A small garden should be made at every poor-house and stocked with quick growing vegetables.

Separate enclosures should be provided for new admissions and cases of infectious disease.

5 A.M. too early to rouse inmates. 6 A.M. more suitable. 7 A.M. gruel to be issued. 10 A.M. first solid meal. 4 P.M. or 5 P.M. last meal.

Asstt. Surg. J. Prentie.

POOR-HOUSE HOSPITALS.

The hospital should be walled off from the rest of the poor-house with its own distinct entrance. No communication should be possible between the hospital and other parts of poor-house.

PAID ESTABLISHMENT.

1 Assistant Surgeon to 100 sick in addition to Hospital Assistant.

1 Hospital Assistant to 50 sick.

1 Compounder or dresser to 50 sick.

1 Head Warder.
3 Warders to 50 sick. } For supervsion of nursing.

3 Gate-keepers.

1 Cook to 50 sick.

1 Sweeper to each latrine.

1 Do. to 50 sick. Ward work very trying.

2 Sweepers do. Removal of sewage, etc.

This number of sweepers absolutely necessary, as the great bulk of cases are diarrhœa and dysentery.

Pauper servants, as required, all to receive R1 monthly with food.

One paid warder to be on duty in each shed, for three hours, day and night.

Two pauper attendants to be on duty in each shed every three hours during day. One to be on duty in each shed for two hours at a time all night.

Hospital Assistants to be provided with quarters just outside hospital gate.

Each patient to be provided with a common string charpoy, pillow, blankets and a sheet. A history of case and treatment to hang at each patient's bedhead. A layer of dry earth, three inches thick, to be under each patient unable to walk to latrine and likely to soil bed. All soiled places to be dug out and filled with dry earth. Soiled bedding to be washed in lime before re-issue. A complete set of hospital clothing to be given each patient on admission. Patients to be bathed with hot-water twice a week, hands and faces twice daily. Superintendent of poor-house to visit hospital every morning and evening, occasionally at night. All defects or neglect to be at once reported to Civil Surgeon.

Hospital Assistant, Compounder and Hospital Head Warder to make a night visit when attendants are being relieved. A drinking water "piau" to be established in hospital yard. Drinking water to be kept in barrels with brass tap and locked cover under guard as in poor-house. Patients not to be allowed to touch the barrels or taps.

A special gang of grave-diggers (Hindus) to be kept for removing and burying bodies. Sweepers not to be employed on any account.

ORPHANAGES.

Overcrowding and site pollution the great causes of disease. Want of anti-scorbutics, liberal and varied diet contributory. Children should pass the greater part of the day outside the orphanage walls.

Large proportion of fat required in food. Extra salt, milk, sugar, with meat or fish, occasionally. To receive an early morning meal of hot sweetened gruel. Young children to be placed in charge of women attendants, who should sleep with them. Attendants should be fed after the children. Establishment the same as for poor-houses. If possible, a European woman should be appointed matron. Latrine pans should be placed just outside the sheds for night use. Children should be bathed every day, weather permitting. Hands and faces after each meal. All children with ulceration of gums to be completely segregated in tents or sheds. Should number increase, the orphanage to be evacuated temporarily, and when thoroughly cleaned, re-occupied by a smaller number of children. Elder children to be frequently marched to river or tank for bathing. Food to be taken, so that they need not return till evening.

182. Yes, such powers are very necessary, as many persons in a starving condition persist in endeavouring to maintain themselves by begging, eventually dying from privation. No compulsion was used in this district.

Asstt. Surg. J. Prentie.

183. An endeavour was made, but it was only found possible to get some earthwork done in the way of raising floors of sheds, filling up hollows and digging drains in the poor-house. During the rains it was not found possible to get any work done beyond cutting drains and repairing enclosure walls. With village relief freely given, the persons in poor-houses are waifs and strays in extremely bad condition not fit for any work.

184. Compulsion was used to keep people in bad condition in the poor-house, but escapes were numerous.

198. For reasons stated under questions 97, 98 and 130, non-working children should always be supplied with cooked food. Adult non-working dependants generally refuse cooked food for caste reasons.

220. Returned to the nearest relative willing to support them. In this district 200 have been so distributed without difficulty. A warder has been sent with each child to the village and personally made him over to relatives. Failing relatives, and for those too young to give any information about themselves (a very small number) they should be placed with respectable "malguzars" as Government wards and maintained by the State, until able to support themselves, or in the case of girls suitably married. Every child knows its caste, and it would be an easy matter to place it in a village with its caste fellows. District officials to make enquiries as to its care and well-being.

MORTALITY DURING THE FAMINE PERIOD.

248. The ratio of deaths per thousand of population in this district during the period 1891—95 was 31·94. During 1896 it was 36·64 and in 1897 rose to 60·78.

249. It was not until the closing months of 1896 that mortality was influenced by scarcity. During 1897 privation was directly or indirectly the main cause of rise in death-rate.

251. As a general rule the deductions are correct. But in this district the high death-rate of 1896 was due mainly to a severe epidemic of influenza in the early months, causing between two and three thousand deaths.

252. Only so far as scanty and foul water-supply is likely to favour the spread of cholera. The number of deaths from cholera during the months of 1896 in which famine occurred was very few.

253. Owing to unreliableness of meal registration agency, deaths from cholera are very often reported as diarrhœa. Allowing for this, there was still a great increase of deaths from bowel-complaints beginning in September 1896 and gaining its maximum in September 1897. I have no doubt that these affections were produced in great measure by insufficient and unwholesome food.

254. The defects found in diet scale laid down for poor-houses have been mentioned in reply to question 180. Similar changes had to be ordered in children's kitchens attached to famine relief-works in this district.

255. After careful verification by the police, the number of deaths directly due to starvation in this district was very small.

Taking the mean of decennium 1886—95 as a basis, the excess mortality of the famine period (attributable indirectly to privation) in this district amounts to about 25,000, after exclusion of deaths due to cholera.

In this district the vital statistics showed that mortality was proportionately greater from the age of 5 years. Under this age, *i.e.*, infant mortality, particularly under 1 year, fell to nearly half the proportion of previous five years. The highest proportion of mortality during the famine period was under the age groups 30 to 60 years.

The percentages of mortality for each age group in vital statistics are shown below:—

Ages.	Mean of five years 1891—95.		Oct. Nov. and Dec. 1896.		1897.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 1 year	33·83	31·80	26·89	25·48	16·05	18·04
1 to 5 years	13·46	13·96	13·45	13·73	12·73	12·69
5 to 10 "	5·75	4·94	6·03	5·47	7·07	6·59
10 to 15 "	3·12	2·72	2·58	2·36	3·91	3·32
15 to 20 "	2·37	2·26	2·07	1·72	2·78	2·80
20 to 30 "	4·73	5·78	4·49	5·37	6·39	6·59
30 to 40 "	5·54	6·14	6·66	6·59	9·41	8·32
40 to 50 "	6·43	6·34	7·90	5·66	10·32	7·93
50 to 60 "	7·56	6·86	9·77	8·38	11·31	9·02
Over 60 "	17·08	21·11	20·14	25·20	19·12	23·79

The foregoing figures show that males suffered more than females, and that the deaths among them were most numerous during the years of working life.

The above conclusions are deduced from the proportion each sex and age bears to the total number of deaths during the famine period. Actually the increase was great under every head.

It is not my experience that parents abandoned their children to any great extent in this district. The inmates of the orphanages were quite 90 per cent. without both parents, these having died in poor-houses or on relief works.

I am not able to state that parents under pressure of want neglected their children. I believe that whatever food was available was often given to the children in preference to themselves.

257. I do not consider that the mortality that occurred was to any extent due to insanitary conditions in relief camps and poor-houses.

I have recommended that the hutting accommodation provided on relief-works should not be massed in one central camp for each different work, but distributed over the sections. I would also recommend that the sheds be covered with cheap tiles instead of thatch, as this latter is never properly water-tight, and the misery as well as danger of people having to sit in wet clothing all night is very great.

Every practicable precaution was taken to provide and protect against contamination pure water-supplies for relief camps and poor-houses.

258. The supply of medicines and medical comforts for sick was ample.

The staff of medical subordinates was not sufficient to allow a Hospital Assistant to each work.

Two Hospital Assistants should be posted to each relief-work with 5,000 persons, one for camp hospitals, the other to supervise sanitary arrangements, attend to sick along the line, inspect workers daily and supervise children's kitchens.

The Civil Surgeon of each district should have an Assistant for inspection duties. An Assistant Surgeon should be posted to every Famine Hospital with 100 sick in addition to Hospital Assistants.

259. In the Bhandara District between 1871 and 1891 the population has increased by 178,037.

260. The birth-rate for years 1878—87 averages 44·94 per *mille*. From 1888—98 it equals 38·47 or a decrease of 6·27 per *mille* for the last ten years.

The death-rate for 10 years, period 1876—85, was 32·37, and for 10 years from 1886—95, 31·25 per *mille*.

261. The average increase of population per cent. per annum between 1871 and 1891 amounts to 1·57 each year.

273. Rice almost entirely eked out by large quantities of "dhal," "lakh," "lakhori" and peas. Meat and fish whenever procurable; also reptiles and earthworms of different kinds.

274. Thrice daily, gruel in the early morning, rice and dhal at 11 A.M. and the same at 8 P.M. Jungle produce and wild fruits are largely used, when procurable "mahua," mangoes, plums, etc., etc.

275. Tamarind seeds largely used with "mahua" in famines.

278. Rice with a little wheat, the latter only in poor-houses.

279. In poor-houses three meals were given daily. In the morning gruel, at 11 A.M. rice, dhal and spices, etc., the same at 5 P.M. The additions and alterations made in famine scale for poor-houses have been mentioned in reply to Question 180.

280. The people complained of the monotonous character of the diet, and as they were all in very weak health with symptoms of scurvy, the food was slightly varied from time to time.

281. The prison scale is more liberal in every way.

Written statement of evidence by the REV. MR. E. D. PRICE, *dated Mandla, Central Provinces, the 11th March 1898.*

Rev. Mr. E. D. Price.

Your letter of the 28th February 1898 was received by me yesterday, the 10th instant, asking my opinion upon various points in connection with the late famine.

1. "The degree of success of the measures adopted in your part of the country in relieving distress and saving life."

The Mandla district is probably the most difficult district for purposes of famine relief administration in India, on account of the absence of any railway line within the district, lack of roads, there being only one pucca road, namely, one of 60 miles between Jabalpur and Mandla. And the fact that the sparse population, numbering 339,373, are scattered over a large area or about 8,000 square miles, and live in small villages of from 10 to 30 houses, and frequently in places difficult of access, and also owing to the fact that there are no big towns in the district. Mandla, the largest, having only a population of 5,057 according to the census of 1891. Consequently the bazaars are very small, and excepting Mandla only held once a week. Between here and Mandla, a distance of 60 miles, there is not a single bania's shop.

During the famine at very many bazaars, even at the larger ones, grain was not to be had for love or money; any coming into the bazaar was at once bought up, and famine-stricken people, who had walked over from the relief works often many miles, wandered aimlessly about with pice in their hands searching for grain. At the relief works themselves grain was sometimes not to be had for a fortnight, and the little in the hands of the patwaris was reserved for the sick and dying.

Having consideration to the above facts you will not be surprised when I state that the measures adopted for the relieving of distress and saving life in this district, were *utterly inadequate.*

This fact is proved by the terribly high mortality throughout the year 1897; *e.g.*, the death-rates rose to 126·27, 197·27 and 199·89 in the months of June, July and August, respectively.

Taking the population of the district at 339,373 in accordance with the census of 1891, there were then 60668·38 deaths during those three months alone; now, taking the average of the Central Provinces death-rates of the five previous years for those three months (including the famine months of July and August 1896), the death-rates are 33·43, 37·19, 43·84, and making a total average of 14267·04 deaths for those three months. The difference, namely 46401·34, shows the number of deaths directly and indirectly caused by starvation, and its accompanying plague of cholera.

The connection between the two was very clearly shown in this village.

During the epidemic here, only some six of those who had been regularly receiving relief from the commencement died from cholera, while of others some 40 or more died from that disease.

The giving of seed-grain and rupees for the purchase of seed-grain, and takavi loans was thoroughly done, and *proved most successful.*

The energetic measures adopted by the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Maw, greatly helped to lessen the high death-rate, but he was sent to the district too late.

The 2nd question—"Any suggestions you are disposed to make for the improvement of those measures in the case of another famine" may perhaps be best answered by stating in what particulars the relief measures fell short, and what further measures should have been taken.

(A). Relief measures should have taken a practical form at the first commencement of scarcity in June 1896.

Measures should have been taken for providing the petty farmers with seed and food-grain.

Mr. Ali Mahomet, the Deputy Commissioner at that time, said he made representations to Government for further powers for that purpose, but was refused.

The Tahsildars and Havildars, I believe, did what they could, but that was very little. The Government should have obliged the larger farmers to lend the grain as formerly to the petty farmers, they, the Government, guaranteeing the loan and interest to be repaid in grain, as is the custom here, 50 per cent. in grain being the ordinary amount of interest. As soon as I found out the state of affairs (1896) about here, I went round to the various farmers for loans of grain, and with a little pressure, this was readily granted on my guaranteeing the loan personally.

In nearly all the villages where relief was thus given, further help was almost unnecessary till April and May 1897. The death-rates in 1896 rose to 113·21, 106·14, 140·3 in June, July and August. Yet nothing was done for the starving so far as I know, except at Mandla, Shapura, and work on one or two katcha roads and relief at our Mission stations.

(B). Now turning to 1897, the Gonds and Baigas, the principal inhabitants of this district, will only leave their own immediate neighbourhood with very extreme reluctance, and on the exercise of considerable pressure, this is especially true of the Baigas. In very many cases not till they were too weak to walk did they crawl towards a relief centre, frequently but to die unknown and unregistered by some nallah, as witness the many corpses to be seen lying about in July and August, and skeletons in December and January. The relief centres were too far apart. Tiny relief works, such as making village paths, katcha roads, well making, or the erection of dams, should have been started at every larger village, making it a centre for all villages, with a radius of 10 miles distance.

I may remark here that the relief works, so far as I have seen, *excepting those on roads*, are *perfectly useless.*

(C). *Children's soup kitchens* should have been started at the commencement of the famine at convenient centres for every five villages or so. The villages here are, generally, from two to five miles apart from each other. These might have been managed by the headmen of the village. Gonds may generally be trusted, with a little supervision. Such soup kitchens managed thus, that I started were in every case successful.

(D). Better arrangements should have been made for supplying the relief centres with sufficient food-grain; that the poor folks, after earning their relief pice, should not have to trudge from village to village endeavouring to buy food-grain.

Here I may say that our relief was worked on the lines laid down in the *Central Provinces Famine Code*, which was found most useful.

The scale of wages as therein stated was found to be in excess of what was required. The people here were paid in pice, but a pice less than the Famine Code allowed.

I should also like to say that, considering the temptations and the responsibilities laid upon the patwaris, who managed the small works of 200 to 500 persons, they were very much underpaid.

(E). Better arrangements should have been made for medical supplies and help to the sick and dying.

It is hard to believe that in the whole of this huge roadless, rainless district, with an area of about 8,000 square miles, no medical help or medicines (excepting quinine and cholera pills) were to be obtained, except at Mandla, Dindori and Thorna, near Bichia and our two Mission stations. Thorna is 35 miles distant from here, and 85 miles or 6 days' journey distant from Amarkantak. At the relief works I saw many fearful sights and sores, and helpless patwaris giving quinine for abscesses, colds, and to dying babies.

(F). More use might have been made of local persons with a great saving to the Government. By "local persons," I mean missionaries and their agents, and malzugars and other villagers of standing though not necessarily of high education.

No. 3 A. "How far the distressed part of the population has by this time recovered its normal health and degree of prosperity."

The giving of seed-grain, etc., in June and July has enabled the people marvellously to recoup themselves.

They are not as prosperous as formerly, but two or three good seasons will make them more prosperous than they have been at any time these last five years.

I certainly anticipate a scarcity in the months of June, July and August of this year, and *arrangements should now be made with a view to anticipate any such contingency.*

Also any new issue of the Famine Code should contain a paragraph relative to the giving of seed-grain, and rupees for the purchase of seed-grain, in times of scarcity.

"B. And whether they have shown greater power of resistance and recovery than in former famines or not."

The last famine 1877 (about) was not so severe, so the village elders say (I have only been in the country six years, so cannot judge), but they have shown far greater power,

Rev. Mr. E. D. Price.

not of resistance, but of recovery. *This power of recovery is entirely due to the distribution of seed-grain, money for the purchase of seed-grain* and *takavi loans.* If this were done at all times of scarcity no very severe famine need be feared in the future. This, after the children's soup kitchens, I take to be the most successful measure adopted. If this policy of giving seed-grain, etc., had only been freely adopted in 1896, the famine of 1897 would have only just risen above a scarcity. Enclosed are some statistics that may perhaps prove of interest. They refer only to Marpha, and are exclusive of the equal amount of relief given at Patwara.

I shall be very happy to give any further information at any time.

[P. S.—Grain for food was imported by me to Marpha from Pendra road, 75 miles distant, on bullocks, and from Mungeli, 120 miles distant, on bullocks, and sold to the people round about.—E. D. P.]

Relief centres at Marpha and in connection *with Marpha* in connection with the *C. M. S. Gond Mission.*

The total number of persons relieved by gifts of food, etc. during the 12 months of 1897.

	Marpha.	Diwari.	Bangwar.	Basadongri.	Gurumgaon.	Singpur.	Totals.
Men .	33,438	9,529	...	...	...	...	42,967
Women .	44,578	22,229	...	...	...	...	66,807
Children .	66,925	25,287	9,832	9,744	2,730	4,732	119,250
TOTAL .	144,941	57,045	9,832	9,744	2,730	4,732	229,024

GRAND TOTAL . 229,024.

The above statistics are exclusive of the equal amount of relief given at Patpara.

Demi-official from REV. E. D. PRICE, *to the Secretary Indian Famine Commission, dated Marpha, Mandla Central Provinces, the 22nd March 1898.*

You will ere this have received the report I sent to you regarding the famine in this district.

On looking over the figures I worked out referring to the death-rates of July, August and September of last year, I find I had not noticed that the death-rate was 1,000 *per annum*, so that my figures are too much (I am glad to say) by a multiple of 4.

The death-rates were :—

	July.	August.	Septemper.	Total.
	197·27	199·89	139·14	536·3
Average—	37·19	43·84	45·09	128·12

Total death will then be, I think, for those three months :—

$$536{\cdot}3 \times \tfrac{1}{12} \times \frac{339{\cdot}373}{1{,}000} = 15{,}166\ 564, \text{ not } 60668{\cdot}38.$$

Average—

$$128{\cdot}12 \times \frac{1}{12} \times \frac{339373}{1000} = 3623{\cdot}2336.$$

Difference—

11543·304, not 46401·34.

I hope the figures previously sent have not misled you.

Written statement of evidence by MR. R. H. RYVES, *Deputy Commissioner, Chhindwara.*

Mr. R.H. Ryves.

A.—DEPARTURES FROM THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES FAMINE CODE WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN THE CHHINDWARA DISTRICT DURING THE RECENT FAMINE.

1. The measures of State relief employed in the district may be summarised as follows :—

(*a*) Relief works (i) Under the Public Works Department.
(ii) Under Civil Officers.

(*b*) Gratuitous relief (i) House-to-house relief.
(ii) Kitchens for children.
(iii) Kitchens on relief-works.
(iv) Kitchens at police posts.
(v) Centres of relief.

(*c*) Poor-houses.

2. Relief-works were conducted, (1) on the task-work system, (2) on the system of piece-work through contractors.

(*a*) The former differed only in detail from the system described in Chapter VI of the Famine Code. The rules followed were those laid down in Public Works Department, G. O. No. 498, dated 6th December 1896, and have been fully described in Mr. Higham's Note on relief-works in the Central Provinces. Subject to certain simplifications they were observed on works in charge of Civil Officers as well as on those under the charge of the Public Works Department.

(*b*) The system of piece-works under contractors was not a Code measure. It was introduced in one charge only in the end of May, and was under the conditions prescribed in Public Works Department, G. O. No. 355—357-A., dated 15th May 1897. The work consisted of spreading and consolidating road metal. Several contractors were employed who were paid according to the outturn of work done at fixed rates, subordinate rates being settled at which the contractors agreed to pay the labourers in their employ. The measure was not a success. The supervision of the contractors and their servants was very unpopular with the Gonds and Korkus, and nearly all these aborigines deserted the work at once and for good. It was found impossible to entirely substitute piece-work for task-work, owing to the presence on the works of many persons whom the contractors could not profitably employ, and for this reason as well as in the interests of sanitation and general supervision, the ordinary famine staff was not appreciably reduced, and there was little saving in establishment. Finally, the contractors proved unable to make payments according to results to the large number of labourers in their employ, and various abuses crept in which led to the system being abolished in favour of task-work in August.

3. *Gratuitous relief.*—(*a*) House-to-house relief was distributed through the mukaddam as prescribed by section 37 (3) of the Famine Code. The doles were made in cash; accounts were kept by the Circle Inspector and not by the Patwari, as laid down in paragraph 27 of the Code. The patwari's duties were limited to the supervision of the work of the mukaddams of his circle.

3 (*b*) *Children's kitchens* were started in all the large villages and towns of the Sausar tahsil when distress declared itself in that tract. The children of neighbouring villages could not be induced to attend them, and their effectiveness was limited to the village within which they were started. It was not found possible to assign each village a radius, as contemplated by section 97 of the Code, and to withdraw cash doles on the house-to-house system in the case of children of the adjacent villages. The measure was a supplement to, rather than a substitute for, the ordinary relief in cash. Owing to the failure of the kitchens to attract children of other villages the numbers relieved at each kitchen were comparatively small, and the organisation was much simpler than that described in Appendix V to the Code. The agency employed was as a rule the headman of the village assisted by the schoolmaster. Homeless waifs were not brought to these kitchens, as prescribed by section 99 of the Code, but were forwarded by the police to the

head-quarters orphanage, where they were detained, while inquiries were made as to their parents.

(c) *Kitchens on relief works* were started primarily for the benefit of children whose parents were employed on the work. They were open, however, to all adults arriving on the work who, owing to physical debility, were temporarily incapacitated from joining a working gang. The question of what arrangements should be made for such people has not been dealt with by the existing Code.

(d) Kitchens at police posts were very small and entailed no extra establishment. They were maintained merely for the purpose, described in section 123 of the Code, of relieving and forwarding to other forms of relief the starving wanderers found on highways and lines of traffic. They were not institutions at which persons were kept in receipt of relief for any length of time.

(e) *Centres of Relief* were a development of the distribution of relief in the form of grain, suggested in section 37 (2) of the Code, and were confined to the jungly and hilly tracts at the north of the district known as the jaghirs. In this locality cash doles were useless, as villages where grain could be purchased were few and far between. Difficulties of communication, on the other hand, and the absence of any reliable agency in the form of the mukaddam, made it impossible to distribute grain at the houses of the people through the village headman.

As an alternative, a system was adopted which was not a Code measure. Centres were established at villages where, owing to the presence of a resident bania, supplies could be obtained, and all persons entitled to gratuitous relief for any of the reasons specified in section 34 of the Famine Code, or who were temporarily incapacitated for work owing to privation, were admitted to these and supplied with food, those who came from a distance being accommodated with shelter. Each centre had a radius of about 10 miles. It resembled a poor-house in appearance and consisted of one or more dwelling sheds, a cook-house and shed for storing water, sheds for cholera and small-pox cases and a latrine. There was, however, no restriction on the people going and coming, as was enforced in the case of poor-houses. Caste objections were respected, and those who preferred to cook their own food were allowed to do so. Recipients of relief therefore fell into four classes:—

(1) Those who lived at the centre and received cooked food.

(2) Those who lived at the centre and cooked their own food.

(3) Those who came for meals and received cooked food.

(4) Those who came daily to the centre and received a ration of uncooked grain.

The ration distributed was the minimum ration in the case of those who received cooked food and its grain equivalent in other cases. Each centre was under the charge of a distributing officer whose duty it was to procure grain on indent from the local bania, and to supervise the distribution of grain or cooked food. Every three centres were under the charge of a Circle Inspector who was responsible for submitting the accounts and discharging recipients of relief who had become able to support themselves, and who remained on tour in his circle for a large part of his time, to see that persons in need of relief did not remain in their villages to starve. The system proved feasible in the thinly populated tract in which it was introduced and after the novelty of the arrangement had worn off was popular with the people.

4. *Poor-houses.*—The rules prescribed by the Code for the management of these institutions were followed practically without alteration.

5. The special forms of relief for respectable persons, artizans, etc., described in sections 101, 103, 104, and 105, were not found necessary. The non-agriculturist population of Chhindwara town were, however, indirectly assisted by the cheap grain shop which was established by the Charitable Committee. This institution brought the prices of food within the means of a large number of people who were in distress, not from want of employment, but from the fact that their wages had remained constant while the prices of grain had risen. Only holders of tickets were allowed to purchase, and it is a question whether such an institution is not a cheaper and less cumbrous way of relieving artizans and weavers, at any rate in the earlier stages of distress, than the method suggested in sections 105 and 106 of the Famine Code. Inquiries among the weavers of this district showed that they suffered not because there was no sale for cloth, but because the margin of profit obtained was not sufficient for the maintenance of the weaver and his family.

6. The provisions of section 107 of the Code were not followed literally. An orphanage was established at head-quarters prior to the closure of poor-houses and kitchens to which all children were sent as soon as it was suspected that they were orphans. In this way inquiries were completed at an early date, and arrangements had been made for the disposal of the children by the time poor-houses and kitchens were closed.

B.—Degree of success which has attended the measures adopted, considered primarily with regard to the relief of distress and the saving of life, and secondarily with regard to economy.

The recent famine does not appear to have seriously retarded the progress of the district. The mortality which may be ascribed to it has been discussed separately. Generally speaking the effect of the increase of deaths over births in the last two years has been to more than cancel the excess birth-rate during the preceding four years, so that the population is probably slightly less than it was at the close of 1891, instead of having undergone a natural increase of about 3·5 per cent. since that year. The area under cultivation appears to have undergone little decrease, if the returns of the area sown with rain crops afford any indication. The area under rain crops in 1897-98, excluding the late sown oil seeds, is not less than 57,530 acres in excess of the area similarly sown in 1895-96—an increase which will go far to counterbalance the contraction in the area of cold weather crops, the extent of which has still to be ascertained. The effect of the famine on the economic condition of landlords and cultivators has been varied. Many whose crops were favoured by circumstances and those whose lands lay outside the area of failure, have profited largely by the high prices, especially in the Sausar tahsil where the people had stocks laid by. On the other hand, all who had to borrow money or seed in order to pursue their occupations, have had to burden themselves with debt on very disadvantageous terms. It is as yet early to form an opinion on the extent to which indebtedness has developed among the cultivating classes, but the evidence afforded by the sale of document stamps and registration statistics relating to land transfer, leads to the conclusion that the credit and stability of the agricultural community have not been seriously undermined. The value of land transferred in various ways in 1896-97 rose, it is true, from 6¼ to over 7 lakhs, but there are signs of a decrease in the current year, and the greater part of the transfers took place between agriculturists.

The numbers on relief never reached the standard of 15 per cent. of the population of the affected tract. The highest percentage reached was 11·9 in the end of July. The average percentage from December 1896 to the end of July 1897 was 7 per cent., and subsequently, when the whole district was recognized as more or less distressed, the incidence of the numbers relieved on the total population never exceeded 4·7 per cent. The numbers on relief were in my opinion at no time larger than was necessary. On the contrary, the Gonds and Korkus, who form the larger part of the population of the distressed tract, were by no means eager to accept relief in any form. Absence from their homes and the organised labour of relief works were repugnant to them, and they were apt to place undue reliance on the subsistence afforded by the wild edible products with which they were familiar, and which had often helped them to tide over temporary periods of scarcity. Very few, therefore, came on works until they had no other alternative; and when any other form of occupation offered itself, such as harvesting or the collection of the mohwa flowers, they left in large numbers. The tendency of the Gonds and Korkus of the remoter parts of the district to hold aloof from relief works was in fact to be regretted, as it led them to exhaust the stocks on which they might have depended while cultivating their lands in the rains, and a prolonged course of diet on unwholesome jungle products, varied only occasionally by a meal of grain, was prejudicial to their health and induced a low vitality. The effect of such self-imposed privation was not apparent until the month of July. Then

Mr. R. H. Ryves.

when the rains had set in and climatic conditions were unhealthy the weaker ones succumbed to the attacks of disease. I am inclined to think that the remedy for this state of things lies with the people themselves. A very large portion of the distressed area was within 10 miles of one relief work or another, and no part was more than 20 miles from a relief work. I question therefore whether multiplying the works in existence would have been attended by any results commensurate with the increased expenditure. The gratuitous relief in the larger portion of the distressed area (that is to say the 1,600 square miles forming the jaghirs) required a special organization, which has already been described. I have no reason to believe that this was inadequate, in that there were any causes other than the initial shyness of the people which diminished its efficiency. It was self-acting in so far that any who felt the need of relief were able to obtain it without the intervention of an inspecting officer, who might or might not be diligent, and it was discriminating because the recipients were perpetually under observation and could be transferred, when their condition allowed it, to relief works. In these two respects it was preferable to village relief, and could be applied to those who were only temporarily unfit for labour. The reluctance of the people to make use of it ceased when they found that caste prejudices were respected, and that there were no restrictions as to residence. The highest incidence of those relieved on the total population of the area to which it was applied was 4·7 per cent. in October, and the increase and decrease in the numbers was gradual and not subject to sudden fluctuations.

Gratuitous relief on the house-to-house system was confined to the khalsa portion of the distressed area, and, until the month of July, was restricted to the permanently incapacitated, who had no relatives to support them. In July orders were issued extending this form of relief to the whole district, as it was found that the high prices were making themselves felt, and those who were temporarily unfitted for employment owing to physical weakness were brought on the relief registers. The numbers relieved rose rapidly in September owing to the appearance of distress in the Sausar tahsil where the harvests are later than elsewhere, and the limit was reached in October when over 10,000 were in receipt of relief.

The staff employed consisted of the Patwaris of the district and eleven Circle Inspectors, each of whom had about 120 villages under his charge. Supervision and control were exercised by the Tahsildars and other superior officers on tour, and the selection of people for gratuitous relief appears to have been made with discretion. No case either came under my personal notice or was reported to me in which the funds allotted had been grossly misapplied. The people showed no anxiety to be placed on relief unless circumstances actually required it. On the contrary, the fact of being classed as a pauper carried with it a certain amount of disgrace in the eyes of the community, and many instances occurred of people voluntarily taking their names off the relief lists as soon as their circumstances improved. Only two cases have been proved in which the local patwari made dishonest deductions from the doles intended for the recipients of relief. As soon as relief began to be distributed on a large scale the headman of the village was employed as the distributing agency, and this arrangement was found to work well, as public opinion deterred the headman from misapplying the funds, while the local patwari not being concerned with the distribution could be trusted to report any malversation of the money. The increase in the death-rate at the close of the rains suggests the question whether it would not have been better to introduce house-to-house relief as a means of succour to those who were temporarily incapacitated for work earlier in the year. It is to be noted that, in August, September and October, when the death-rate was unusually high, the scarcity of food in the distressed area had, to a certain extent, ceased owing to the kharif harvest, and that the mortality was probably due not so much to the existing privation, but was the result of past hardships undergone earlier in the year. I doubt very much, however, whether the advantages which would have resulted from the extension of gratuitous relief outweigh the objections to the scheme. At the time that relief works were opened the numbers of persons unfitted for labour by privation were very few indeed, and house-to-house relief would have been a concession to those who from aversion to labour and other causes held back from relief works which could not have failed to have a demoralising effect on the labouring population. I believe that the effect of such a measure would have been to create a large class of paupers who preferred to keep themselves in poor physical condition in order to qualify for relief, to doing an honest day's work on a fair wage, and that in this way the object of extending the relief would have been defeated. Much difficulty was experienced in inducing persons who had passed through poor-houses to take to work when they had recovered strength, and it is only by the exercise of authority that they could be prevented from hanging about the headquarters of the poor-house and seeking readmission. In the case of house-to-house relief the attention of the supervising officers is so much divided between the different villages under their charge, that I am certain the system would have failed, and that relief would have been given to a number of undeserving paupers. All Government forests, except those closed for protection against fire, were thrown open in January for the collection of grass, fuel and jungle fruits. The concession as regards grass and fuel was only of value in the neighbourhood of large towns. The most important jungle products were mohwa flowers, and the fruit of the Achor tree. Both these trees are extremely common in every part of the district and the crops were good. Mohwa alone was estimated by the people themselves as two months' food supply in the more jungly villages, and the subsistence afforded by this crop rendered gratuitous relief less necessary than it would otherwise have been. As an exclusive article of diet, however, it is unwholesome, and, though nourishing, induces diarrhœa. It should be dried and pounded and mixed with a certain amount of ordinary flour to give it "body". The gathering of the mohwa crop in March and April is not therefore a reason for contracting relief works. People should be encouraged to store the mohwa flower collected and to use it to supplement and economise the famine wage. Many workers did this, and at the beginning of the rains had saved enough with the assistance of what mohwa was left in stock to support themselves in their houses while they attended to their fields.

Rupees 27,245 from Government funds and R64,788 from the District Charitable Grant were advanced in small amounts to cultivators for seed grain or bullocks. More than 8,000 cultivators were benefited by these grants. The distribution of the money was confined to the areas originally recognized as distressed, as in other parts only the labouring classes and not cultivators were affected. Inquiries made subsequently show that the recipients of the grants as a rule devoted the money to the purpose for which it was intended, and the good done by this timely distribution cannot be over-estimated. In some localities it would have been quite impossible for the cultivators to procure seed if they had not been thus assisted, and the scarcity would have been indefinitely prolonged.

C.—Advice as to the measures and methods of working which seem likely to prove most effective in future.

The monthly reports now submitted by Revenue Inspectors, if full and accurate, appear to furnish all the information that a District Officer requires to enable him to judge if famine is imminent or probable. In this district the kharif harvest is that which produces the crops on which the poor classes depend, the wheat crop being grown chiefly for export purposes. A failure of the kharif crop reducing the general outturn in any large area to one quarter of the average would probably mean famine which would be more or less acute according to the nature of the harvests in the adjoining districts. On the earliest information of such a failure having occurred preparations should in my opinion be made for starting relief measures. The back-bone of these should be a programme of relief works sufficiently numerous to bring employment within 12 miles of any part of the affected area. There is scope enough for road construction and maintenance in the district for such a programme to be possible, except in regard to a few small jungly localities for which minor works, if necessary, could be devised and placed in charge of civil officers.

All these works should not of course be opened at once. Work should be started in the areas where distress appears most severe and the programme developed as necessities arise. The presence of labourers from any locality in any numbers on a work more than 12 miles distant from their homes, and physical deterioration of the population noticed by inspecting officers would be reasons for either opening a relief work at once in that locality, or if doubt existed as to the existence or degree of the distress, a test-work as contemplated by section 13 of the Provincial Famine Code. The work should be on the task-work system as being most suited to the character of the people and payments should be made daily as far as possible. When payments are made twice a week the workers buy on credit, and a percentage of the famine wage goes into the pockets of the banias on account of interest and is therefore wasted.

Should it appear that people are coming on the works in larger numbers than is warranted by the degree of distress prevailing, the task should be raised. There is no reason why workers who appear prosperous and well nourished should not be placed in separate gangs and given a higher task than persons whose appearance indicates poverty. In such gangs there should never be an excess number of women, and the workers should be fined below the minimum wage if necessary. The tendency of people to come on works unnecessarily for the sake of the wage has not been one of the difficulties experienced in this district, but the measure above mentioned has been suggested as an adequate remedy. Simultaneously with the starting of relief works, or if possible before, a register should be prepared for every village, showing the names of the persons resident in the village who are entitled to gratuitous relief by being permanently incapacitated for work and having no relatives able to support them, and house-to-house relief for the benefit of such people should be organised.

At the same time kitchens should be started at such police posts, and, if possible, in large villages in various localities, and the district should be divided into kitchen circles with a radius of 10 miles each. The object of these kitchens should be to stop wanderers and to forward them to the nearest relief work and to afford temporary relief to those residents of the circle who have become so reduced as to be unable to reach the relief work without assistance in the shape of food. Persons should not be retained at the kitchen longer than necessary, but as soon as they have recovered strength enough to travel should be forwarded to the nearest work. Children abandoned by their parents should be received and fed at these kitchens pending inquiries.

On each relief work there should be a similar kitchen where persons as yet too weak to work, and working children, should be fed.

Adults refusing cooked food should be allowed to cook their own, but residence at the kitchen (or on the work) should be compulsory. Persons attempting to treat the kitchens as a permanent means of relief and not a transitory stage towards relief works, should, if refractory, be sent to the headquarters poor-house.

The kitchens should also be of use in checking the completeness of the list of persons permanently incapacitated for labour, and as such entitled to gratuitous relief, and any such persons presenting themselves should be sent back to their homes as soon as arrangements have been made for them.

There should be one poor-house at headquarters in which wanderers from other districts, recalcitrant paupers and professional beggars should be housed, until they can be otherwise disposed of. These arrangements should continue till the rains break. It will then be found that many persons return to their villages to resume cultivation. These persons will require careful watching in order that they may be relieved as soon as the necessity appears. If, however, relief works have been sufficiently accessible and have been used freely, it is probable that the people who, with the help of the mohwa crop, will have been able to save something from their famine wage, will not require relief until well into or during the rains. Such relief should take the form of house-to-house relief as during August and September the people have to watch the crops and prepare the land for the October sowings.

An effort should also be made to clear the works of all persons of weak physique as soon as the rains begin. Life on a work during the rains is one of hardship and exposure, and it is sounder economy to pay a weakly person gratuitously for the three months of the monsoon and save his life, than to support him on works all through the dry season only to have him die from exposure during the rains. Each work should, therefore, be inspected and the infirm gangs drafted back to their homes, along with all dependents who can be separated from their relations. Weeding out the incapables should increase the efficiency of the working gangs and the work of supervision will be thereby lightened. In the remoter parts it will be necessary to substitute centres of relief in the shape of food and grain such as were established during the recent famine in this district, for the house-to-house relief in cash. Where these are started they should be used for the admission of the persons who in other parts of the district would be relieved at the police kitchens. With the breaking of the rains children's kitchens may be opened with advantage as a subordinate form of relief in large villages and towns for the benefit of the children of the place. In smaller villages the children deserving relief should receive cash payments, through the mukaddam whose business it should be to see that the child is properly fed.

The above scheme appears to me to be the one most calculated to give effectual relief in this district. It differs essentially from the proposals contained in sections 26, 30 and 31 of Mr. Higham's Note on the management of relief-works. The people to be dealt with, however, live under very different conditions, and differ much in character from the classes to which the arguments contained in the above-mentioned paragraphs of the Note are intended to apply. They are unaccustomed to labour of the kind which can be offered on relief-works, and shrink from making any change in their settled habits. Some are only beginning to become reconciled to the use of the plough. Only the severest necessity will make them leave the neighbourhood of their villages. At the outset of scarcity they cherish delusive hopes that the products of the neighbouring jungles will carry them through the period of distress, and, when these fail, to loot a neighbouring village of its reserve stock of seed grain, or kill for food the cattle which in a year of drought are sent in larger numbers than usual to graze in the jungle, are expedients which suggest themselves as much more agreeable than a journey to a relief-work many miles distant. For these reasons relief-works should from the first be as numerous and as accessible as economy will permit.

Written answers to the Commission's questions by Mr. R. H. Ryves, *Deputy Commissioner, Chhindwara.*

**53 to 56.*—I consider roads by far the most useful form of work for labour in a district like Chhindwara, where communications are difficult. Metal collection is, next to simple earth-work, a most suitable form of labour, as it is easily adjustible to the powers of strong or weak men, women or children.

The district road scheme is as yet far from completed, and it seems improbable in view of the past history of the district, as regards famine, that the requirements of future famines will ever exhaust the programme of constructing all the roads required for the district, raising them to first class roads and maintaining them as first class. The supply of material for road metal is inexhaustible in every part of the district.

57 to 60.—There is, on the other hand, little scope for tanks. Where irrigation is employed, the water-supply is derived from wells. Owing to the contour of the country there are few large areas capable of being irrigated from any one tank. Small tanks might be constructed here and there which would employ 1,000 persons for three months and no more. These, however, would not be of public utility and should be taken up as loan works, at the cost of the local proprietor.

71 to 83.—Experience in the past year has shown that the effective radius of a relief-work in this district does not exceed 10 or 12 miles in any case, and that labourers can and do travel five or six miles to and from the works daily, but not more. It would be most unwise to insist on labourers proceeding to a distant work when another was at their doors, but it would be justifiable to refuse other forms of relief to any *able-bodied* labourer residing within that distance.

No attempt was made to draft labourers in this district, as it would certainly have been a failure. Residence was not made a condition of relief; the workers were about equally divided between those who lived on the works and those who came daily from their homes.

Any attempt to make the Gonds of this district reside on the works would be disastrous, and so also would be any attempt to concentrate the works. The wage and labour tests are quite sufficient. Most of the Gonds have small plots of land which they will not leave for any length of time. Nearly all the workers used to pay temporary visits to their homes to see that their houses and property were in order and then return to the works.

It is, therefore, desirable that relief-works should be made as accessible, that is to say, as numerous as possible, compatible with economy.

III.—Task-work and Piece-work.

84 to 87.—Piece-work through the agency of contractors was introduced on one work employing about 2,000

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

Mr. R. H. Rynes.

men, and continued during June, July, and August, and was then abolished. As already noted, it was a complete failure.

Piece-work under the direct supervision of the Public Works Department was introduced on another work without authority and continued for a week only. At the end of that time I visited the work, nearly all the workers were Gonds and I found them all firmly convinced that they had been defrauded of their pay and quite at the mercy of the disbursing officer and mate of the gang, because they were unable to understand the calculations of payment according to measurements. I endeavoured to check the payments but was unable do so, as the workers themselves could not tell me what they had received. It is not perhaps generally realised that many Gonds cannot count in their minds beyond five. It is evident that, under the piece-work system, where at intervals of three days or so varying number of copper coins are paid to workers who are quite unable either to understand the principle of payment or to retain a recollection of the sums paid, the opportunities for fraud on the part of the paying staff are many.

Piece-work had such a very short existence in this district that, beyond quoting the above example as indicating that the system is too advanced for the labourers who have to be dealt with in this locality, and that task work was wisely adhered to, I have no remarks to make.

The classification adopted by the Nerbudda Division Conference held on the 18th ultimo, the proceedings of which have been published under letter No. 30-C from the Commissioner, Nerbudda Division, to the Chief Secretary in the Revenue Department, seems to me the most practical that can be made.

95.—I would adopt the following scale of wages:—

	Men.	Women.
Diggers (and stone breakers)	19 chataks	17 chataks.
Carriers	14 „	14 „
Infirm gang	14 „	14 „
Children 7 to 12	10 „	10 „

Subject to the conditions (1) that an addition of $\frac{1}{8}$th should be made for every working day on account of the Sunday wage, (2) that children under 12 should be sent to the kitchen and treated as dependents when they show signs of emaciation. All children under 7 years should be so treated.

99.—In the past famine fining has been the only penalty for short work, and I know of no other way of punishing the labourers for laziness. The proposal to send recalcitrant workers to a poor-house savours of illegality, and is far too cumbrous to be of use in practice. I do not, however, approve of the system of fining the whole number of diggers in a gang regularly, when work is short, down to the minimum wage. I consider that if adhered to strictly, it produces the reverse effect to what is aimed at. The hard working members of the gang are discouraged and find out sooner or later that the easiest plan is to do no more work than they can help and take the minimum wage. My experience has been that, where gangs consistently failed to work up to the task, the staff have been as much to blame as the workers, and *vice versâ*; that where the officer-in-charge and his subordinates have taken a keen personal interest in the work, full tasks have been exacted and fines have hardly ever been required. A lazy sub-overseer, on the other hand, is almost certain to use the incentive that fining has on the workers as an excuse for neglecting the duties of supervision. He may even, as once occurred to my knowledge, have the gang sheets sent to his house and impose the fines without visiting the work for a week.

To remedy these defects I would make frequent fine on any work the subject of inquiry, and I would judge the outturn of a work by its incidence on the actual cost plus the fines imposed. At the same time I would empower the officer-in-charge (not the sub-overseer) to fine below the minimum wage to any extent, provided that fines should be imposed on the individual and not on the gang. Fines should be imposed on diggers only, and the gang should be made to select from their numbers the members at fault. Ordinarily speaking, not more than 10 per cent. of the diggers of a gang would require to be fined. I believe that, if this system of fining were adopted with discretion, the outturn of task-work gangs would seldom be less than the task set, and that it would no longer be possible to object to the system on the ground of unnecessary expense.

Under the system followed last year fines were frequently imposed, not with a view to correcting the laziness of the workers, but in order to cheapen the rates. As an extreme instance I would mention a gang who completed 99 per cent. of the work set them during a fortnight, but were nevertheless fined down to the minimum wage on no less than 7 days. Such practices, which only serve to discourage the workers, were only possible under the system by which all the diggers of a gang were fined indiscriminately.

101.—My experience of the minimum wage is that it affords a bare subsistence on which a man who does not work may recover condition gradually, and on which a man doing light work may keep his condition. Attempts to exact hard work or tasks on the minimum wage have the effect sooner or later of reducing the men so treated to the infirm gang.

102.—Excess work done by a gang should be set off against subsequent short work. I would not recommend any addition being made to the normal wage. The method of avoiding the difficulty on account of Sunday wage has already been discussed in the answer to question 95.

IV.—Relations of Civil and P. W. D. Officers.

114.—Works should, as far as possible, be under the Public Works Department. It should not be necessary to have works under civil officers except where, for special reasons, such as the completion or amendment of a survey, difficulty may be found in starting works under the Public Works Department. Works under civil officers should be small and simple in their nature.

116.—It seems difficult to improve on the definition of the relations between Civil and Public Works Department officers, contained in section 130 of the Famine Code. Any attempt to define "spheres of influence" and divide responsibility would be undesirable. No famine has ever been managed with absolute success in all its details, and a division of authority and responsibility would be certain to lead to mutual recrimination.

VI A.—Interference with the supply of labour to private employers.

133—139.—I received no complaints which were well founded. In October some malguzars complained that they could not obtain agricultural labourers, but on inquiry I found that the wages offered were not sufficient to support life at the prices then ruling.

I.—Mortality.

248.—The mortality of the last two years is compared with the average for the period 1891—95 in the appended table:—

	1891-95 average.	1896.		1897.	
		No.	Difference.	No.	Difference.
Total deaths	11,635	15,215	+3,580	17,615	+59.80
Annual death-rate	3,427	4,282	+855	5,158	+1,731
Cholera	384	1,128	+744	1,612	+1,228
Diarrhœa and dysentery	557	863	+306	1,840	+1,283
Fever	7,097	8,739	+1,642	9,354	+2,207
Other causes	3,337	3,954	+617	4,431	+1,094

It may be noted that the average for the last 5 years is a good standard for comparison, as it differs very slightly from the average mortality since 1881.

249.—To estimate with any pretensions to accuracy the toal number of deaths, directly or indirectly due to privation, is manifestly impossible, but some rough deductions can be drawn in the light of the following considerations:—

(1) The connection between cholera and scarcity in each year is very remote. The disease was in each case imported from Seoni and was spread by personal intercourse. Famine labourers were not specially subject to its attacks.

(2) Similarly, it is very doubtful if the increase in fever deaths in 1896 was in any way attributable to privation. Of the total excess of 1,642 deaths, over 1,300 occurred in the first half of the year before distress had begun, and the mortality from fever from the 1st July to

31st December was not in excess of the average for that period.

(3) An epidemic of fever appeared at the close of the rains of 1897, which was undoubtedly attributable, at any rate in part, to other causes than scarcity, although a considerable amount of the excessive mortality was due to the feeble condition of those attacked. Mortality was unprecedentedly high, averaging as high as 130 per mille per annum for the quarter ending the 30th October in a part of the district (the Pandhurna Station House Circle of the Sausar tahsil) where there had been no failure of crops, where distress never became severe, and where the death-rate had previously been unusually low. A similar excess of fever mortality occurred in a greater or lesser degree in other parts of the district, and local inquiries which were made showed that well-to-do persons as well as poor were attacked with fatal results. Such an epidemic is not without precedent. One occurred in March and April 1894 which raised the death-rate of those months to 64·5 per mille per annum for the district, as a whole, at a time when no scarcity existed. The inquiries made would appear to justify quite one-third of the excess fever mortality of 1897 being put down to other causes than privation.

(4) The return of deaths due to other causes includes deaths from lung affections, colds, etc., and the increase is probably attributable to the same causes as the increase in fever.

253.—(5). On the other hand, the increased prevalence of dysentery and diarrhœa is the direct consequence of privation. These diseases were induced, as a rule, either by a course of unwholesome vegetable diet, or by undue indulgence in unripe grain when the early rain crops began to come to maturity.

251.—(6). There would appear to be no reason for believing that the conditions of either year were so healthy that the deaths reported in excess of the average do not represent fully the effect of famine on the death-rate. As already pointed out, the early part of 1896, though dry, was distinguished by the prevalence of fever.

To sum up, in estimating the excess mortality caused by famine, I would include all excess deaths from diarrhœa and dysentery in both years; one-third of the excess deaths from fever and other causes in 1896, and one-third of the number of such deaths in 1897.

According to this computation the deaths directly or indirectly due to famine were: in 1896, 1,000, and in 1897, 3,500; or, in other words, 2·9 and 10·1, respectively, per mille of the total population. It should be added that statistics are not available for the jaghir tract where distress was more severe and the mortality was probably somewhat higher than in the khalsa. The above estimate is, as has been already pointed out, an arbitrary one.

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255—257.—The number of deaths reported as due to actual starvation in 1897 was 38 only but the returns on this point are necessarily very unsatisfactory, as the police were not competent to decide in many cases the cause of death. Nearly all the deaths reported as due to starvation were those of wanderers from other districts. The cases of residents of the district were scattered, and, as a rule, occurred outside the distressed area. They were individual cases of hardship and it is difficult to see how provision could have been made for them by Government. In some cases, death was due to the obstinacy and apathy of the persons themselves. No case was reported and proved of a person dying from starvation after being refused Government relief. As in other famines that have occurred, the mortality was heavier among men than women, and both in 1896 and 1897 over 50 per cent. of the deaths occurred among children under five years of age and adults over 60 years of age. The actual figures are given below:—

Year.	1896.	1897.
(1) Total deaths.	15,215.	17,615.
(2) Children under 1 year . . .	4,083	3,905
(3) Children 1—5 years	2,089	2,196
(4) Persons over 60	2,526	3,113
Total of (2), (3) and (4) .	8,698	9,214

The neglect of children by their parents was noticeable on relief works and led to the substitution of children's kitchens for the cash allowances for dependents. Cases in which children were abandoned by their parents were not of common occurrence.

257.—The Civil Surgeon, whom I have consulted on the matter, is of opinion that the diseases which caused the mortality in relief camps, poor-houses and food kitchens were not such as arise from want of sanitation.

The arrangements for conservancy and water-supply, as ordered, were adequate, but the difficulty of getting orders conscientiously and intelligently obeyed by native subordinates was great. Improved sanitation can, in my opinion, be obtained only by constant and increased European supervision, for which a larger European staff is required.

258.—The staff of medical subordinates might well have been doubled, but I understand that trained men were not to be had.

Written statement of evidence by RAI SAHIB GANGA SINGH, *Extra-Assistant Commissioner, Raipur.*

Rai Sahib Ganga Singh.

In compliance with letter No. 598, dated the 3rd February 1898, I have the honour to submit herewith my remarks on the heads A, B, C and D.

2. I do not think there was any departure from the principles of the Central Provinces Famine Code during the recent famine in the Raipur District, but the literal provisions of the Famine Code were departed from in some cases. I give below a few instances to which my attention was attracted:—

(*a*) The district was divided into a number of Sub-Divisions irrespective of tahsils, and each Sub-Division was placed under an Assistant or Extra-Assistant Commissioner. In one case a Sub-Division was placed under a Tahsildar. Revenue Inspectors and the Police within that area were placed directly under the orders of these Sub-Divisional Officers as far as famine work was concerned. Most of the Sub-Divisional Officers were also made Disbursing Officers [*see* 1 (*b*), Famine Code].

(*b*) In August and September 1897, when the famine became severe, it was found necessary to extend the sphere of section 34 (*d*), so as to include in the list all persons whose appearance showed signs of suffering from want of food, and in some cases whole families were given relief.

(*c*) Hutting arrangements in the Public Works Department works were never completed. For want of materials and other causes the work was found to be impracticable, sections 51 (3) and 70, Famine Code.

(*d*) The classification of relief workers as given in section 52, Famine Code, was impracticable. A simple classification is necessary.

(*e*) When the distress became severe the limited and untrained staff was not able to comply with the provisions of sections 53 and 54.

(*f*) For the same reason as above the system of payment described in sections 57 and 59 did not work satisfactorily; the staff appeared to be

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inadequate to keep a proper control in Public Works Department work.

(*g*) The system of not recording the names of relief workers made it difficult to arrive at the truth of the complaints that were made of non-payment and unauthorised dismissals of relief workers under the Public Works Department.

(*h*) One kitchen was opened in connection with each Public Works Department work in Baloda charge, and the workers were spread over a distance of 3 to 6 miles. The dependents of some workers therefore were unable to take advantage of the kitchens. I think cash allowances should be given to the dependents of those persons who work more than a mile away from the kitchens, section 77.

(*i*) Sub-Divisional Civil Relief Officers were unable to comply with the Account Rules as their staff was so inadequate and untrained.

3. My charge during this late famine operation consisted of two Revenue Inspectors' circles, one being in the Raipur and the other in the Simga Tahsil. This part of the district was one of the most severely affected tracts in Raipur. The reason being—

(1) A large number of malguzars being absentee landlords.

(2) The majority of tenants being Satnami Chamars.

(3) Rice crop being the mainstay of the people, there being very little rabi.

Although the crop of 1895 was a failure, the promising crop of 1896 till August enabled the officials to make the malguzars and mahajans to advance grain to their poorer neighbours. But as soon as it became known that the crop of 1896 was ruined by the sudden cessation of rains, the malguzars and mahajans ceased to advance grain to their neighbours, and the condition of the poorer classes became desperate, and it became apparent that a famine was at our door. At the end of August 1896 a poor-house was started at Baloda by private subscription, and in September a test work was started on the Polari-Amera Road. These measures proved the existence of a famine, and in October 1896 different measures of relief began to be organized and undertaken.

4. As soon as the local works were fairly started in March 1897, the majority of the people who had left their villages returned to their homes, where they were employed on local works in their own or neighbouring villages. Special and vigorous measures were taken to enable the tenants to sow their lands and to enable them to perform agricultural operations. Our efforts were so far successful that more than R0-12-0 area was sown, and, thanks to the timely rains, the produce was above the average. As a result of this in 1897 the Public Works Department works and the poor-house at Baloda were deserted, and the contractors began to complain for want of labourers for their works. This is, I think, a proof of the success of our measurers for the relief of distress. I regret I have not got figures of vital satistics as I am on leave, but I know from my personal experience that thousands of lives were saved by the relief measures undertaken by Government, and the suffering of the people was greatly reduced.

A number of deaths at Baloda and Lown were no doubt due to a certain extent to the famine, but a large proportion of these deaths were of persons who were attracted to Baloda owing to the existence of the poor-house and relief works from the earliest stages of the famine.

5. A sum of R10,922 was spent on the poor-house at Baloda and 5,806 persons passed through the poor-house: as I have already said, being far away from Raipur on leave, I am unable to quote figures to support my statement, but a reference to figures in office in Raipur will show that relief measures in Baloda charge were as economical as could be expected under the circumstances.

6. The following measures of conducting relief operations appear to be simple and economical, and I think are likely to give the best results both as regards the saving of life and the relief of distress:—

(*a*) All small local works should be carried on through the agency of malguzars assisted by a Committee of respectable men of the village. If necessary, provisions may be made in the Lambardari and Mukaddam Rules to enforce this duty. If necessary, the malguzars may be permitted to employ mates and muharrirs. Such works as may be useful to the village people, such as excavation of new tanks and *tars* and improvement of old tanks and *tars* (water channels), may be undertaken. In villages where no such works can be undertaken, making of embankments to fields may be taken in hand.

(*b*) The malguzars and mukkadams of villages may be required to form a small charitable Committee for their villages. The malguzars, mukkadam, patwari and a few respectable tenants and other residents of the village may make its members. The Committee may be permitted to raise money and grain subscriptions as may be convenient, and they may spend the same on charitable objects according to the opinion of the Committee. The Revenue Inspectors may examine the accounts of these Committees once a year. The Patwari and Mukaddam Rules may be made to include provisions to this effect. In times of distress and famine Government will make grants of money to these Committees according to the size and importance of each village, with instructions as to how the money is to be used. The malguzars will be held responsible for keeping the villages together. The organisation and working of such a Committee during ordinary times will enable the Government to secure the services of a trained agency for work during a famine.

(*c*) The present charges of Revenue Inspectors consisting of about 150 villages are too large. I think at the time of famine no Revenue Inspectors should have more than 50 villages.

(*d*) It would be very convenient for famine administration, and probably for other purposes also, if the Police Station-house and Out-post Circles corresponded with Revenue Inspectors' Circles.

7. (*a*) Civil officers deputed to work under the Public Works Department as Officers-in-charge should always be Government officials holding permanent appointments, and some arrangements should be made to enable the Deputy Commissioner to have his orders carried out promptly by the Public Works Department.

(*b*) All mates should be literate men who can write the names of all persons who work under them.

(*c*) All local works should be paid according to the amount of work done subject to a minimum, but persons who could do more work may be permitted to earn more. This will serve as a stimulus to exertion. The system by which a relief worker cannot earn more than the prescribed wage tends to make them lazy.

(*d*) The details of staff to be given to Relief Officers and poor-houses should be fixed in the Code with reference to the number, amount and nature of work they are required to perform. The system of account to be kept during a famine should be given in detail in the Code, allowance being made for the unexpected urgency and unforeseen demands on the time at the disposal of Relief Officers; most of the shortcomings during the recent famine were due to the inadequacy and inexperience of the staff at the disposal of the Famine Relief Officers.

(*e*) Relief should be given in money, but when the local supply of grain is exhausted, grain contractors should be employed as provided in section 28, Famine Code, because it is much easier to control and check money distribution than the distribution of grain.

Written statement of evidence by MR. B. P. STANDEN, *Settlement Officer, Betul*

Mr. B. P. Standen.

I was only in charge of famine operations for four months, from 20th August to middle of December, and then only of Village Relief in the Multai Tahsil. The circumstances under which I got what little experience I have of famine work were peculiar as relief had been neglected in the tract in question, and it is possible that the attitude of the people towards the measures taken, and the effect of those measures, was therefore different to what it would have been had relief been given from the beginning.

VILLAGE RELIEF.

Cash Relief.

On issue of orders by the Commissioner of Division the registers of poor were prepared by the Patwaris for each village. The Circle Inspector was sent out, taking with him a permanent advance of Rs. 300 for gratuitous relief. When he came to a village for the first time, after orders had issued for the distribution of gratuitous relief in it, he checked the Patwari's register and ascertained that all who were on the register were rightly entered, and that no names that should have been entered had been omitted. He then paid the mukaddam a sum of money sufficient to last for three weeks' relief and the mukaddam distributed it daily. If he was able to write, the mukaddam entered up daily the expenditure in his cash book of receipts and expenditure: but as a rule the mukaddam could not write, and in the majority of villages there was no literate person resident; in such cases the Patwari visited every village of his Circle once a week, *viz.*, on Sunday, and entered up the accounts, enquiring from each person on the list whether he had received relief or not.

Inspectors had orders to visit every village in their Circle once a fortnight, and on their recurring visits they checked the list and the account of receipts and payments and replenished the mukaddam's advance making up the 3 weeks, supply of money. In every large village where the number of persons on the register was very large the distribution was made every 3rd or 4th day by the mukaddam to save trouble. The Inspector's work was checked by an Assistant and the Assistant's work by me. The Inspectors were made disbursing officers and drew their own abstract bills on the Sub-treasury at Multai, sending the detailed bills through me and the Deputy Commissioner to the Commissioner of Division. They were allowed one treasure guard to carry money in addition to their chainmen, and, after a little training, drew their bills correctly enough. When the operations first began the two Assistants were given an advance of Rs. 300 in order that they might supply mukaddams with money in those villages which the Circle Inspector had not then reached, in order that there might be as little delay as possible in the grant of relief. These advances were not recouped when spent, and Inspectors were then the only disbursing officers for Village Relief. The rates paid were at first:—

5 pice per diem for men and women,
3 pice per diem for children over 10 years,
2 pice per diem for children under 10 years,
1 pice per diem for children in arms,

unless the person had been placed on relief because weakened by starvation and would be able to earn his own living when fed up. To such the minimum relief worker's wage was paid. When prices fell they were lowered to 3 pice, 2 pice, 1½ and 1 pice. Inspectors had about 60 villages each and Assistants 200 each; there are 415 villages in the whole Tahsil.

Kitchens.

In 14 villages where there were a large number of children requiring relief, kitchens were established, and in Multai, the Tahsil head-quarters, a kitchen, which could be used as a temporary poor-house, was started. Children were admitted to kitchens by order of the Inspector or Assistant or myself, and were struck off the kitchen registers on the same authority. Much difficulty was at first experienced in overcoming the suspicions of the people and inducing them to send their children to feed in the kitchens, and all the arrangements were on this account kept as simple and informal as possible. The greatest number relieved at any kitchen daily never exceeded 100, and the majority of kitchens fed 40 or 50 only. The only building used was a small house for the cook room and grain store room. The house selected was generally one in the village market-place, and the children were fed outside in the market-place, if fine, and, in rainy weather, in any convenient verandah. These kitchens were not opened till September, many of them after the middle of the month after which not much rain fell. Had they been earlier opened it would probably have been necessary to construct shelters for them to feed under. All kitchens except at Multai and two others, where there was no school, were managed by the village schoolmasters who were paid an allowance of Rs. 5. The establishment consisted of a cook and a waterman. *Kichri* of rice or *kutki* and *dal* was the food given. In those villages, where grain could be procured locally without difficulty, this was done. The local contractor sent in his bill weekly to me through the manager of the kitchen, who forwarded it with his weekly return of numbers fed, and the bill was paid from my advance by money order or special messenger. Where grain could not be easily procured locally it was supplied by the shop of Seth Sunderlal, Rai Sahib, of MuRai, on indent by the managers. The manager's indent was returned to him by the Seth with the grain indented for and the manager, after endorsing on it the quantity of grain received, returned it to the Seth, who sent it up to me as voucher for his bill. Each manager had an advance of Rs. 50 for contingencies, pay of servants, etc., which was recouped as required from my permanent advance. A good deal of trouble was taken to induce people to send their children from surrounding villages to a central kitchen but with little success. It was found that, even after the rain ceased, children would not go more than a mile at most to their food even when nurses were provided to look after them. The kitchens were therefore useful only in the richest and more thickly populated parts of the Tahsil.

Differences between system followed and that prescribed by Code.

The system of village cash relief, described above, differs from that prescribed in Chapter V of the Code only in the agency prescribed for the revision of the register of poor and the amount of the doles given. The only difficulty in the distribution of this relief is to decide who is entitled to receive it. I found that Inspectors were not always able to judge correctly whether a person came under clause (*d*) of rule 34 or not. As the institution of a system of relief was delayed much too long in part of the Multai Tahsil, there was a very large number of persons who had become from hunger too weak to earn their living and were entitled to relief under clause (*d*). It is of course necessarily extremely difficult to judge whether a person is so weak as to be unable to work. I often found that those who appeared much emaciated were by no means the weakest. Patwaris are certainly not capable of deciding whether such persons should be retained on the register or not, and I am doubtful whether the power to strike off their names should be given to any one below the rank of Sub-Divisional Officer (as defined in the Code), and this would certainly be the best plan if the Sub-Division were not larger than, say, 150 villages, so that the Sub-Divisional Officer could visit each village once a month. In this connection it must be remembered that when the number of Inspectors' circles in a district are trebled, it is not possible to appoint to all circles officials as intelligent as the average Revenue Inspector. The Code fixes the amount of cash relief at the sum sufficient to purchase the minimum ration stated in Chapter VII. The lower scale of rates stated above was fixed in accordance with this requirement of the Code. The necessity for using the higher rate was specially urgent in the Multai Tahsil, as the number of able-bodied persons who had become too weak to work owing to hunger was unusually large, but I think wherever such persons are found it would be good policy to relieve them at the higher rate (*i.e.*, the minimum relief worker's wage) when there is reasonable prospect that work will be obtainable within a month or six weeks in order that they may be all the sooner in a position to support themselves.

Relief-work.

Only one relief work was opened in the Tahsil. It was on the Betul-Nagpur *vid* Multai road and was, until shortly before the necessity for relief ceased to exist, located close to Multai Town. The greater part of the labourers who never exceeded 1,100 in number were residents of Multai It was found impossible to induce more than a very few persons to go to the work from a distance of more than 5 miles. Had the hutting arrangements been more elaborate, a larger number might have joined the work. The labour provided was metal-breaking and was not liked by the people who were mostly Kunbis, Bhoies and Mohras accustomed to agricultural labour. The work was not opened till the middle of the rains (7th August). It was not under my charge and I can depose nothing as to the management of relief work.

Mr. B. P. Standen.

The only road works in the district for which there is any real need are:—The improvement of the Dabka ghat in the south of the Multai Tahsil (about 8 miles), the improvement of the Atner-Kolgaon ghat over the Tapti (about 4 miles) and the improvement of Heradehi-Chowki ghat (about 25 miles) both in the south of the Betul Tahsil.

Relief-works available in case of famine in the future.

The Nagpur-Multai road is not metalled, but there is little traffic on it, most of the trade of the district going to Itarsi and the Berars.

There is not much scope for irrigation works as rice is little grown, and except in the north of the district the soil is not suitable for it. Possibly, sugar-cane might be grown under tanks if a sufficient supply of water were provided. I believe this is done in Chanda. Much cane is now grown under wells. As the rabi crops more often suffer from excess than deficiency of rain, irrigation works would not be of much benefit to them. Tanks for watering cattle and for the use of the villagers are found here and there all over the district and are much valued. In my opinion village tanks with perhaps one or two irrigation tanks for rice or cane cultivation would be the best form for relief works in the next famine. The sites for the tanks would have to be selected by skilled agency, and cultivators would have to be consulted on the subject of growing sugar-cane under tanks. Rice tanks could, I think, be advantageously constructed in several places in the north of the district, where the soil is suitable for rice cultivation.

The people appeared to me to be much more anxious for tank work to be given them than for any form of road work, and in some places the construction of tanks would be specially popular, *e.g.*, Malajpur, where an annual fair is held and the water-supply is short, Ashta, where there is already a small ruined tank and Phagun fair is held annually.

So far as my small experience of the work goes, I think the following points should be borne in mind in future famines in this district:—

General.

1. At the commencement of distress the district should be at once divided up into the maximum number of Inspectors' Circles, which it is estimated will be required when the famine is at its worst, and Inspectors should be appointed to them. During this famine the Circles were increased in number, if I remember rightly, on three or four occasions, the result being that new men had to learn their work at a time when the pressure of work was at the maximum, and that patwaris were often at a loss to know to which Inspector they were subordinate. This is of course the cheapest way, but the money is saved at the expense of a great loss of efficiency.

2. It should be remembered that when prices are so high that the ordinary wages of labour will not supply labourers with sufficient food to support life, the fact that the cultivating classes are not much distressed will not prevent the labourers from starving. Because in time of scarcity the cultivators will do themselves many of those operations of agriculture which are ordinarily done by hired labour; so that the demand for labour is less than usual, and as in ordinary times the supply of labour is in many villages larger than is sufficient to meet the permanent demand, the supply is in times of scarcity very much in excess of the demand unless there be a relief-work in the immediate neighbourhood, and the consequence is that wages of agricultural labour actually fall at such times. Wages are always lower in large than in small villages (of course I mean purely agricultural villages), and I found in some large villages at the end of the rains that the reaping wage paid was half the normal. This was overlooked in estimating the degree of distress that was likely to be experienced in the best parts of the Multai Tahsil, and as this part of the district was not visited after the end of the cold weather by any official (except the Tahsildar and Naib-Tahsildar) responsible for the conduct of famine operations, the distress there was not relieved till it had attained very alarming proportions. Distress did not begin so soon there as in the jungly parts of the district, because the wheat harvest, which was not a bad one, afforded abundant labour in February and March, but from the middle of the hot weather the labouring classes were every bit as hard pressed as in the jungly parts of the district.

3. In the open season village gratuitous relief should not be refused to any able-bodied person on the ground that he ought to attend a relief-work, unless there is a work within a day's march, say 15 miles. In the rains, unless really weather-proof hutting accommodation is provided, people should not be expected to remain on the works, and gratuitous relief should not be withheld from them on the ground that they ought to be on the works unless the hutting arrangements are really adequate, or there is a work so near (say 4 miles distant) that they can attend it from their homes.

4. The officers in charge of gratuitous relief should be empowered to place on relief any person who applied for it, whether able to earn his living or not, if it were satisfactorily established that the applicant had at the time no means of livelihood, and if there was no immediate prospect of his obtaining regular labour. It seems to me that it is only by means of some provision of this sort that we can avoid letting the able-bodied labouring population run down so much in condition that they recover their strength with difficulty, if at all. Under the existing rule an able-bodied man cannot be put on gratuitous relief until he has become so weak as to be unable to labour. Supposing an Inspector on his visit to a village finds an able-bodied labourer who has been without regular labour for some weeks, but is not then so weak as to be, in the Inspector's opinion, unable to earn his living, the Inspector will not enter him on his list, but by the time the Inspector comes round again, say in one fortnight (if not delayed from any cause), the man may be beyond saving. I do not think much money need be wasted in unnecessary relief in this way with reasonable care. I would make the grant of gratuitous relief to all those persons dependent on their doing any labour they were capable of in the fields of their village. For instance, in the rains, if there were any weeding to be done, they would help in it. It would be understood that the Mukaddam should have the allotment of their labour and he would ordinarily allot it to the poor cultivators first. Had this been done this year many poor cultivators would have reaped a good crop of juari or tur which has been chocked by weeds. This system would of course be open to several abuses, but I do not think any satisfactory system of famine relief can be devised which shall be capable of being run in all its branches under the strict check and supervision that are applied to ordinary official expenditure.

5. It will be gathered from the above that I think a system of Village Relief must be the principal means of relieving distress in the rains.

Revd. Mr. A. Stoll.

Written statement of evidence by the Revd. Mr. A. Stoll, *Missionary, German American Evangelical Mission, Raipur, dated the 7th March 1896.*

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 12th February 1896, in which you ask me for any suggestion I would make regarding the operation of the Famine Code, and in answer to it, I beg to say that, according to my experience, especially among Chamars, not only was there no departure from the rules laid down, but they were executed to the fullest extent possible. I even had the impression that in some cases too much had been done. In my younger days I passed myself through 3 years of very poor harvests in Switzerland, but the Government never thought to interfere with a helping hand; each village community had to provide for its own poor. Here I have seen in several instances that people were fed for whom it would have been much better if work had been provided for them and if they had been forced to work, and I know that the great liberality with which the people had been helped, had a demoralizing effect, especially on Chamars, a naturally lazy sort of people. I saw people in Chamar villages begging for food, whilst relief works were carried on near by; but they would not work.

Therefore I beg to suggest that in a future calamity no poor-houses, no soup kitchens and no orphanages should be opened by Government, but everywhere work should be provided for the needy. In January and February last year I saw on the Dhamtary, Rajim and Arang road sometimes great crowds of people going along the road towards the jungle, because they had heard that road-making and building operations were to be started there. If in some way or other work could be found for the needy, no poor-houses and no orphanages would be necessary.

To provide work each village should be forced to do something for the inhabitants; road-making, digging wells and enlarging of tanks should be left in the hands of the villagers themselves. A cess ought to be laid on the well-to-do farmers, and the poorer class should get work and be paid by the money collected. After the harvest I find sometimes large groups of people in the villages doing nothing, and there are no roads and no water in the tank in the hot weather. These people ought to be forced to enlarge their tanks themselves. In Switzerland each village has its own establishment and provides for its school, roads and water, and in this country each village ought to be made to look after its own interest. I believe the cause of scarcity lies not only in the insufficiency of rain, but in the indifference and laziness of the people. Many farmers had a relative good harvest because their fields were near a tank which could be opened, but they would not help even their own relatives, who were in distress. My idea is that the burden of providing for famine should be as much as possible shifted from Government and put on the different communities which, of course, would have to be made more self-governing bodies.

Revd. Mr. A. Stoll.

Written statement of evidence by Mr. G. H. STREATFIELD, *Assistant District Superintendent of Police, Bilaspur.*

Mr. G. H. Streatfield.

(A).—DEPARTURES FROM THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES FAMINE CODE WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES DURING THE FAMINE.

In the district in which I was on famine duty I do not think that there have been any departures from the broad rules of the Famine Code, though in small matters there have been a certain number of divergencies.

The Famine Code seems to contemplate that in village relief the mukaddam and patwari will be the chief agents. I found this to be quite impossible. The mukaddams had practically nothing to do with the lists, and I found that any people suggested by them were just the people who were not fit recipients for the relief. The patwari was used for compiling the list, but no relief was granted without being checked by a Revenue Inspector, and, if possible, the Circle Officer himself. The patwari generally entered about 50 per cent. of the village, and those mostly included his own friends or even relations, and also any relation of the malguzar. In one case I found a patwari had entered forty female servants of a malguzar who was the owner of forty odd villages.

In regard also to the distribution of the monthly allowance, the patwari was absolutely unreliable, and every village was paid by the Revenue Inspector, who personally checked the entries before making payment, as without this there was almost a certainty of corruption creeping in.

As regards relief to respectable women, I found this quite unnecessary; in many cases the women had been entered, but on inquiry they were all found to have some relative who would support them, but who had persuaded the patwari to enter them in the hope of payment being sanctioned.

Kitchens were not started till the beginning of September, and at no time attained to very great numbers. The people of the district for some reason did not take to them; they seemed to be afraid of their children being kidnapped. I was at the pains to show about 20 parents the kitchen arrangements and explain the whole thing to them on the spot, but still they refused to send their children.

I found there was no reason to divide the kitchens into castes; any children of high caste seemed to have some means of support. At any rate they seemed ashamed of confessing their want, though of course the part which I had to deal with was very poor, and most men of high caste were either malguzars or their relations.

It was found quite impossible for the police to do the patrolling work laid down in the Code, so kotwars were made responsible for each bye-way near their village, and along all the main roads a systematic patrol of four chaprasis and a *doli* was started to pick up all wanderers they might meet, and should any be found who were unable to walk through weakness they were put into the *doli* and brought to certain settled places—either a relief work or kitchen or poor-house. This was found to work excellently, as up to that time in spite of police efforts people were always wandering along the road in an aimless way, and unless caught, simply went on till they died. This was especially so during the rains.

(B).—DEGREE OF SUCCESS WHICH HAS ATTENDED THE MEASURES ADOPTED, CONSIDERED PRIMARILY WITH REGARD TO THE RELIEF OF DISTRESS AND SAVING OF LIFE, AND SECONDARILY WITH REGARD TO ECONOMY.

I consider the measures adopted were eminently successful. It cannot be expected that some people will not succumb to the effects of starvation when they are of the class that inhabit this Division. I have frequently met men strong and young (originally) in a village a mile from a relief road to whom it has been absolutely necessary to give gratuitous relief, and on inquiry I have found they have deliberately remained in their village starving until they had become sufficiently weak to receive gratuitous relief rather than go a mile to work. This being the case, it is evident that they may misjudge their capacity and go a little too far and get into such a state that recovery is impossible. I think that, with regard to recovery, the measures have been economical as far as it is possible to be so, with the exception of the money advanced under the Agricultural Improvements Loans Act for the building of tanks. In this case it seems to me, and I have found it so in experience, that a malguzar or large tenant takes a loan mostly with the idea of pleasing the "Sirkar", and really cares very little what happens to the money. He simply gives an order that such and such a tank is to be dug, and there the matter rests. He takes no trouble to see that the distressed of his village are given work or that they receive proper payment, and when he happens to hear an officer is coming round, he just orders some of his villagers to go and work. I caught one man who had *begared* the whole of his village to work on his tank the day he heard I was coming. I think with the extremely liberal terms that the loans are granted, it would not be a great hardship if the malguzars were made to pay a proper Work Agent, who should be appointed by Government to see that the work was properly done, and that the distressed were really given work; at present the inclination is either to let things slide or else to give the work to skilled or anyhow strong men. Of course inspection can rectify this somewhat, but the Revenue Inspector and Famine Officer cannot inspect more than once a month, and experience shows that the patwari is as often as not under the malguzari's thumb.

(C).—ADVICE AS TO THE MEASURES AND METHODS OF WORKING, WHICH SEEM LIKELY TO PROVE MOST EFFECTIVE IN FUTURE IN THESE TWO RESPECTS.

I do not know why the contract system of making roads is considered a bad one; it was tried in every part for about a month and then stopped. During that time it worked admirably and without a hitch. Local malguzars took the contract and the men of the neighbouring villages work well under them. Of course there is the objection that in this way coolies earn so much that they are loth to leave the work, but just during the harvesting time, when labour is wanted, piece-work could be introduced throughout. Some task gangs would of course always have to continue all through for the weakly people who might apply, so that the extension would only mean a slight increase of staff, if any, as many of the workers would clear off to their own villages.

As regards village relief, I do not think at present there is sufficient deterrent put on the recipient. At present a villager knows that he has only to reach a sufficient state of emaciation to receive gratuitous relief, so does not much care about going out of his way to get work. It seems to me to refuse to earn your living is just as bad as refusing to work on a relief work, and I don't see why a man, when he has clearly allowed himself to become thin, should not be sent to the poor-house and put on penal ration. In fact I would institute a regular penal ward to which most people in villages who were capable of supporting themselves and who refused should be sent, and afterwards drafted to a relief work '*willy nilly*'. This may sound absurd, but I am sure that, if some penalty was attached to merely letting yourself starve, and people were to see that Government was not going to help them unless they helped themselves, the numbers on gratuitous relief would be reduced about 15 per cent. in these parts anyhow.

(D).—OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS OR OPINIONS THOUGHT LIKELY TO BE USEFUL IN FUTURE FAMINES.

I think that, in time of famine, kotwars are not made half the use of they might be. The unfortunate kotwar is the

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first to suffer in the time of famine, and yet gets practically no compensation. In one district he got R2 a month, while *kungals* were getting R2-8-0 or R3. It is pretty well known that in time of famine the police are so hopelessly overworked with the increase of convicts, that even with extra men the orders in the Famine Code cannot be carried out as they should. I don't see why the kotwar should not be enrolled as a regular rural police and paid, say, R4, and be made amenable more or less to police discipline. In this way all the working of road patrols and bye-lanes could be handed over to them and could be thoroughly and efficiently carried out, and if it was not done the kotwars could be punished. At present nothing can be done to him, as in famine time he does not in the least mind being dismissed. Of course I suppose there is the cost to consider, but I doubt if it would cost much more than, say, 50 extra police, seeing that, at present in time of famine, kotwars receive R2 a head in most villages.

Revd. Mr. G. L. Wharton.

Written statement of evidence by the REVD. MR. G. L. WHARTON, *Christian Mission, Hurda, C. P., dated the 8th March 1898.*

In reply to your kind communication of 28th February 1898, I would say:—

First.—The opening of relief works in this district early in the famine proved a most successful means of help to the poor people before they became too weak to work, thus preventing as well as relieving much distress. After the rains set in, however, in my opinion, the relief works were not a success. The crowding together of such crowds in one camp was not conducive to either good health or morals, and very little work could be done. It was virtually gratuitous relief under the most unfavourable conditions. The measures for the furnishing of seed-grain, bullocks, ploughs, etc., to the indigent farmers, when we consider that so much of the distribution was dependent on the native patwaris, was a great boon to the ryots, and was carried out very successfully. It is not too much to say that the measures and the execution of them deserve the highest encomium as far as the Government is concerned.

Second.—I would suggest that the good measures adopted might be improved by breaking up the relief camps when the rains came on, then continue helping the people by sending them to their own several villages where they would have good shelter, be in smaller companies, and ready for any work that might be undertaken near the village or in the fields. When prosperity began to return, the poor people would be ready to take advantage of it.

It is my opinion that, where it is possible, a larger force of Europeans should be placed in charge of these measures of relief, and, where this cannot be, then native officials, holding good and responsible positions, should be chosen.

Third.—I have lately travelled and lived in different parts of this district, and I can say that the health of the people is good, and very little signs of the famine appear. The people look well. Prosperity is returning, but in my opinion, they have not sufficiently recovered their last year's losses to be able to pay last year's arrears and this year's dues at the same time, as the malguzars are compelling them to do. This is especially true of the Korkus and Gonds of the Satpura hills.

Written statements of evidence sent in by witnesses selected to give evidence before the Commission, but not orally examined.

BERAR.

Written statement of evidence by MR. R. M. WILLIAMSON, *Officiating Deputy Conservator of Forests, Ellichpur, dated the 11th February 1898.* *Mr. R. M. Williamson.*

[NOTE.—Statistics regarding the famine and relief measures in the Melghat taluk, Ellichpur District, have been given by the Conservator of Forests, Hyderabad Assigned Districts, in his statement. Needless repetition of the same has been avoided here as far as possible.]

I.—AS TO THE EXTENT AND SEVERITY OF THE DISTRESS.

1. I have been in charge of the Ellichpur Forest Division since October 1896, and was in charge of the relief works under the joint orders of the Deputy Commissioner and Conservator of Forests from December 1896 to October 1897. I was on tour in the district a total of 7½ months. *Question 40.

2. The Melghat taluk, Ellichpur, is a hilly forest tract resembling physically the adjoining Central Provinces districts and peopled by aboriginal tribes. The following statement relates *exclusively* to relief work among such tribes. Question 128.

3. The distress was due to the failure (*i.e.*, early cessation) of the 1896 rains, to high prices of food and low prices of forest produce. The latter is practically the only article of export, and in a normal year 2 to 2½ lakhs of rupees is earned by the people in exporting. Question 2.

4. The failure of the crops in 1896 was practically complete on the light, red, shallow soils which form probably 50 per cent. of the cultivated area, and is absolutely dependent on seasonable rainfall. Irrigation is impossible. The 1895 harvest had been bad, and the people complained of a succession of three or four bad years. The cultivated black soil area—of which there is one considerable block with 80 villages and patches in most parts—gave 4 to 8 anna crops in 1896. Question 3 (a). Question 6. Question 4.

5. Prices of grain doubled by November and trebled by May, and ruled about 8 seers a rupee for at least four months. Meanwhile the prices of forest produce, owing to the partially impoverished condition of the plains and to the competition among the hill people for a bare living fell so, that the profits of exporters were reduced to one-half or one-fourth of normal. Expressed in grain the profits of exporters fell, therefore, to one-fourth or even one-tenth of the normal. Question 3 (b).

6. The majority of the people (chiefly Korkus with a few Gonds, etc.,) live from hand to mouth, and the vast majority have no reserve to fall back on. Question 5. Question 7.

7. There is no record of previous famine in the Melghat, thanks largely to the general immunity of the plains of Berar and the consequently steady maintenance of demand for labour and forest produce. Residents whose memory goes back 35 years remember no such period of distress. Question 8.

II.—AS TO THE SUFFICIENCY AND ECONOMY OF RELIEF MEASURES.

8. In my opinion the relief measures were generally successful. There are no mortuary returns for the Melghat, but there is unfortunately no doubt that the mortality has been somewhat in excess of the normal, chiefly among the old, weak, and the very young. At the same time, I do not think this could have been prevented, to any appreciable extent, by more extensive or timely relief measures. It was due to the apathy and ignorance of the hill people who are not unaccustomed to the pinch of hunger, and who had never been "relieved" before, and did not at first look to Government for support. Hundreds who should have gone to the relief works, and in their subsequent condition should have been gratuitously relieved by Government, flocked to the neighbouring plains, villages, and towns begging a precarious existence. I fear the mortality among these must have been considerable. Questions 12 to 15. Question 189.

9. Self-acting tests of necessity, of the stringent nature prescribed in the Code, were not applied in the Melghat taluk, and are, in my opinion, wholly inapplicable to aboriginal forest tribes who, by nature, hate steady work under supervision, and road work specially. The wilder of them, who perhaps most required relief, had never done such work before, and often expressed their inability and uselessness, knowing that, ordinarily, such work is usually only offered to the strong and more capable, or skilled. The real excuse was generally laziness or apathy, but in any case it was difficult to get many such to the relief works. Only moral suasion was employed and failing that they were left to shift for themselves. Work was offered to all capable of work, at wages just sufficient to support the worker and his dependents, and a fair day's work exacted in return. Considering the dislike of the aboriginal people to such work under supervision, I think this constituted a sufficiently severe test of necessity. Questions 18–20. Question 128.

10. The dependents were, in effect, duly supported, as would be done by the workers ordinarily, and I believe the higher wage consequently given to the workers (*i.e.*, including allowance for dependents) attracted those in need of relief, without, in itself, the method involving greater total cost to Government.

This plan also obviated large crowded camps, as many of the dependents remained in their villages, thereby reducing the difficulty of water-supply and the danger of epidemic outbreaks. It also largely prevented men sending their women and children only to the works, and thus kept the proportion of men to women on the works about even.

11. Exact tasks could not be laid down owing to the insufficiency of trained staff and the ever-varying nature of the work (chiefly unmetalled hill roads). Further, it would have been an entire novelty, and probably deterrent to the workers. In such tracts I therefore consider such tasks most difficult to lay down, even if not harmful. Where the workers are amenable to discipline, as was distinctly the case in the Melghat taluk, the exaction of a fair day's work from each seems sufficient; this is proved, I think, by the results. Question 22.

The total cost of works may have varied from 20 per cent. to 50 per cent. in excess of the normal cost of similar works owing to the numbers of untrained hands and of women and children.

12. Numerous and scattered small works are necessary in hill and forest tracts, such as the Melghat, on account of the scattered population, danger of epidemics, difficulty of water-supply, etc. We had about seven works in progress at a time in the Melghat taluk. Question 23. Question 68.

13. Residence on the works was therefore the rule, though not obligatory, provided the workers came punctually to the work. I do not think residence on the works was objected to so much as the work itself, or that that alone kept many away from the works. When the work lay within two miles of the workers' village they resided at home, and I see no objection to the practice where feasible. Questions 74 to 76.

14. The maximum pressure on the relief works was from the time when harvesting closed (December), to the time when the mohwa flowered and timber and bamboo export were in full swing (March). Question 24.

* The numbers of questions referred to are those drawn up by the Commission.

Mr. R. M. Williamson.

15. Works were started by 18th December 1896, and were in my opinion sufficiently early. The excessive migration to the plains in November would not have been lessened appreciably even if works had been started then, for the people would generally have sought field work in preference to road work.

16. Forest concessions, such as would benefit the exporters and not merely traders or purchasers in the plains, were most difficult to arrange. Various temporary reductions in rates were, however, gradually introduced, and greatly benefited exporters.

Question 31.

All edible forest products were of course given free to the people, though not for export beyond the taluk.

Question 216.

17. I think the Code should allow greater freedom in dealing with wild forest tracts, and note that in such tracts Local Governments may with advantage simplify matters by applying the spirit and not the letter of the Code, as was done in the Melghat taluk.

Question 33.

III.—Departures from Code measures.

18. As stated in last paragraph, no attempt was made to adhere to the letter of the Code. The main departures as to works were—

(i) The omission of specific tasks and corresponding payment (*vide* paragraphs 9 and 11).

(ii) The simpler classification of labourers.

(iii) Weekly payment (with advances where necessary) instead of daily.

(iv) Payment of workers to include support of dependents (*vide* paragraphs 9 and 10).

Question 125.

(v) Calculation of pay in pice not pies.

(vi) Assistance to traders for import of grain or direct import and sale by Government.

The reasons for these and minor departures were the exigencies of the work, the smallness of the trained staff, the character of the people, the nature of the country, etc., as explained above or hereafter.

19. As to weekly payments adopted with advances to workers where found necessary, the system confessedly had drawbacks, but it enabled one officer to make payments on, and to supervise, two or three works at distances of ten or more miles apart.

Questions 124 and 126.

20. There being practically no stocks of grain in the taluk, food for the workers, as well as for gratuitous relief, had all to be imported from the plains. In order to have regular sales on the works at moderate and stable rates, it was found necessary to assist baniahs by payment of carriage from Ellichpur and a small commission, in return for which they guaranteed unfailing supply and sale at the current rates obtaining in Ellichpur weekly bazar.

In anticipation of the rains, when the fair weather roads become impassable, Government had to import and store large quantities of grain, as private traders were unable or reluctant, and to sell the same during the rains at current rates in the plains.

21. I should suggest the following combination of measures for the relief of tracts like the Melghat taluk :—

Question 46.

(i) Numerous scattered relief works (chiefly roads).

(ii) Encouragement of export of forest-produce by certain rebates on Government dues, especially on the more perishable produce, or by the cheap sale of grain to exporters only at the wood markets.

This can only be done to a limited extent ; otherwise sale prices fall and the object is defeated.

(iii) Cheap sale of grain in small quantities to those poor, with the means to purchase at the relief centres.

(iv) Gratuitous relief for the destitute incapable of work at the above relief centres.

(v) Each relief centre to form the centre of an inspection circle of, say, 100 to 150 square miles, within which the relieving officer should visit all villages periodically and endeavour to induce those requiring relief to go to the nearest relief work, and the incapable to come to the relief centre.

IV.—Relief Works.

22. Almost the only relief works undertaken in the Melghat taluk were unmetalled roads. All are of permanent utility, and will be maintained by forest or district funds. Many were sketched out previously in the forest working plan, and these would have had to be made shortly under any circumstances. One anicut was cleared of silt deposit, but this proves to have been waste labour.

Question 53.

23. I do not think any programme of large works possible in the Melghat taluk or similar tracts, or desirable (*vide* paragraph 12). There would be no difficulty in drawing up a programme of useful local small works in the next famine, as was done in the Melghat taluk in 1896 and 1897.

Question 69.

24. Once the hill people reconcile themselves to leaving the village in search of work, they do not mind going 15 miles ; and as it is impossible, to my mind, to make the works so numerous that some shall not have to go this distance, I should certainly refuse relief to any able-bodied person refusing to go that distance to work.

Question 71.

25. The people on certain works suffered from cold nights and from working in wet during the rains. Large numbers of blankets and saris were purchased from Charitable Relief Funds and distributed among workers (and others) in the rains, when, as the famine wore on, they were more required.

Questions 81 and 82.

V.—Task work and piece work.

26. Piece work was only slightly tried in the Melghat taluk relief works, and then only in the shape of difficult work for the more skilled workers. In my opinion it is unsuited to aboriginal forest tribes, sharing the same objections as task work (*vide* paragraph 11). In any case it requires a rather larger and certainly a larger trained staff than was available or was necessitated by the system adopted (with its freedom from measured individual tasks) in the Melghat taluk.

Questions 84—86.

27. I should classify workers as follows : The more trained or skilled under piece work at the lowest wages above the ordinary workers' wage which they can be got to accept. These formed a very small proportion of the whole in the Melghat. The remainder I would classify merely as men (or diggers), women (or carriers), and children (carriers), *i.e.*, three classes, one of diggers and two of carriers. If the latter were in excess and any women can be induced to dig, I would give them digger's wages. Weakly men incapable of digging I would allow to carry, and would pay them carrier's wages.

Question 94.

28. I should pay the equivalent of 12, 10 and 8 chataks staple grain respectively to the three classes, plus 1 pice for condiments.

Question 95.

29. I should recommend fourteen years as the limit between children and adults, and not, as a rule, employ children under 10, having only one class of children.

Questions 98 and 97.

30. Idlers, etc., I should fine a quarter day's wage. If persistent, up to half a day's wage.

Question 99.

31. Small numbers of people, chiefly drafts out of the poor-house and new comers unfit for any but very light work, were employed for months on the minimum wage in weeding, etc. I think their condition did not deteriorate in the least rather the reverse ; but they were able to add to their diet various herbs, etc.

Question 101.

32. Our experience in the Melghat taluk was that people insisted on one day's rest a week, which they took on pay day, refusing as a rule all work that day. They received no pay for the day if they did not work, but made the six days' pay eke out. The existence of edible fruits, roots, herbs, etc., in the surrounding jungles no doubt made this possible. They utilized the day in visiting their homes and taking food to their dependents, washing, repairing huts, visiting bazar, etc.

Question 103.

Work proceeded as usual the remaining six days of the week.

33. The average cost of the roads made was ₹560 per mile, including three heavy ghat roads, and I consider the normal expenditure would have been ₹400 per mile. Thus I should estimate excess at 33 per cent., due to insufficient organization at the commencement, inferior labour, disproportionate number of carriers, and the numerous incidental charges, *e.g.*, hutting, tools, etc.

Question 131.

VI.—Gratuitous Relief.

34. In the Melghat taluk works workers were expected to support their dependents either on the works or preferably at their homes, and we always refused gratuitous relief to any incapable person known to have a relative on the works or elsewhere able to support him. But it is generally impossible to find out for certain. Should an incapable person's relatives declare inability to support him, and I believed their word, I should not refuse such person gratuitous relief because said relatives refuse to go on to relief works. They may be able to struggle on if relieved of the burden of supporting the helpless relative, not otherwise.

Question 156.

35. With reference to the actual measures in the Melghat taluk, I think the inspection organization was generally sufficient to check, and prevent abuse of, gratuitous relief. European, or senior native, officers made frequent inspections, while the two largest relief centres were managed by two missionaries who lent their services.

Questions 168, 171, and 192.

I think the organization might with advantage have been stronger, however, in visiting the villages and inducing the absolutely destitute and incapable to come in to the relief centres.

36. Actual relief in the homes of the people was scarcely attempted in the Melghat taluk. With sufficient organization, as above, and carting the people in, if necessary, I think relief centres meet nearly, if not all, the needs of the case.

Questions 185, 188, and 190.

In the majority of cases those on gratuitous relief in the Melghat taluk lived at the relief centre (*i.e.*, having come in from their villages) or in neighbouring villages. Hence checking was easier than if relief had been given in their homes.

Mr. R. M. Williamson.

37. Only those appearing quite incapable of work were given gratuitous relief—except for such work as grinding grain, sweeping, etc.; all capable of work were given as many days' rations as necessary to carry them to the nearest relief work and despatched. This was naturally more or less abused by the people, who would sometimes reappear under false pretences, often giving a different name and place of residence. I do not think the abuse went far though, and if possible, the men were sent straight to the works under an escort.

Question 186.

38. I cannot conceive of gratuitous relief at relief centres doing away with the necessity of relief works, but, as stated in paragraph 36, I think relief centres preferable, because easier to manage and check than village relief.

Question 188.

VII.—Private Charitable Relief.

39. I most certainly think the best way of spending the bulk of the charity fund receipts is in assisting broken down agriculturists, for that is the most remunerative and has ten times greater effect in alleviating distress than any other way. I think the help should be given just before the commencement of the agricultural season.

Question 239.

Question 230.

40. I think, in dealing with aboriginal tribes, the help should be given as far as possible in kind and not in cash; that it should be distributed just in time for requirements, and that no available means should be neglected of ensuring that the seed given is actually sown and not eaten, as happened in cases in the Melghat taluk. I would further strongly recommend a certain allowance of food being given to support the most needy agriculturists while sowing and tending their crops, and that this be given at the same time as the seed, or half then and the balance when it is known that the field is sown.

41. I think that the Charitable Relief Fund grant in the Melghat has had an enormous effect in alleviating the distress.

Written statement of evidence by the Revd. Mr. A. B. Windsor, *Missionary, Kurku Mission, Berar, dated Morsi, the 19th February 1898.*

Revd. Mr. A. B. Windsor.

At the request of the Revd. A. Muller, Superintendent of the Kurku and Central India Hill Mission, I, in April last, took charge under Mr. C. Bagshawe, Conservator of Forests, Hyderabad Assigned Districts, of the poor-house at Ghatang in the Melghat. A shop also for the sale of grain—*jowari* dál, pepper, and salt—at cheap rates was under my charge.

A. As I am unacquainted with the Bombay Famine Code, I am unable to say anything regarding departures from its principles.

B. In order to show how far success attended the measures adopted, I have thought it well to give a short account of the poor-house, touching upon such points as are raised in questions 172 to 184 of questions drawn up by the Famine Commission.

At first the people did not take kindly to the poor-house, but gradually either their aversion passed away or they were so hardly put to that no other resource was left them. So that, after the first month, our number rapidly and continuously increased until the population numbered between five and six hundred. This number was made up of Kurkus, Gaulis, Gaulans, and some few Kunbis, the Kurkus greatly preponderating.

In many cases much persuasion had to be used to get the people into the poor-house. Once there they settled down; and though they were quite free to leave if they wished, there were not a dozen cases of escape or willing departure. In a few cases people who would not conform to the rules were turned out. These generally returned asking for readmission, which was granted them. Such people were afterwards amenable to discipline.

For the accommodation of the people eight large sheds of bamboo tattie thatched with grass were erected. For the heavier work of cutting and bringing timber paid labour was employed, but the work of making tatties, bringing grass, and thatching was almost entirely carried out by the poor-house people. When such work was not going on, in order that the folk might not sit idling, they were required to collect stones into heaps, and when this was done they moved the heaps of stones from one place to another. But for the fact that the Kurku and Central India Hill Mission had relief work close at hand and had undertaken the repairing of the Ghatang-Bitore road, the poor-house people would have been employed in clearing this road of stones.

At one time as many as one-third of the poor-house people were inhabitants of the Central Provinces. As soon as arrangements could be made with the Central Provinces authorities, those, as soon as they were fit to travel, were sent in charge of forest guards to Borgaon. For some reason which I was unable to discover the people were very unwilling to go there. Consequently the people ran away whilst on the road, and I think not a single one reached Borgaon. Most of these people found their way to the Mission relief works on the Khamla road, where they were supported.

The ration for each person per diem was as follows:—

	Jowari. Chataks.	Dál. Chatak.	Salt and pepper. Tolas.
Men . . .	10	1	1
Women . .	8	1	1
Children . .	6	1	1

In addition to this they had occasionally onions (at private expense) and such jungle herbs as were suitable for food. This allowance of food was sufficient to keep the people in fair condition.

Each person's ration was served out to him or her separately, and the people cooked for themselves. This seems to me to be preferable to serving out cooked food, as it prevents dissatisfaction, provides light employment, *viz.*, cooking and bringing wood, and is homelike. In the case of people unable to cook for themselves, others willingly undertook the task. The water-supply was obtained from a distant well by means of a water cart. In this case, no fit drinking water being near, it was a necessity. Still I think that the plan

Revd. Mr. A. B. Windsor.

might advantageously be generally adopted, as, however good the sanitary arrangements may be, it is almost impossible to prevent the contamination of near water. Much of the sickness of the Mission relief works was traceable to contaminated water.

As far as possible as people became sufficiently strong they were systematically drafted on to the relief works, so that though the poor-house was inspected frequently by the Conservator of Forests, and at different times by the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner, no complaint was made of people being harboured who were fit for relief work. By this means the population was kept considerably lower than it would otherwise have been.

During greater part of the time a hospital assistant was attached to the poor-house, for whom huts were erected as hospital, also a separate shed for cooking purposes, and small *jopris* at a distance in case of an outbreak of cholera.

During the months from July to September the hospital was full, dysentery and diarrhœa being prevalent during that period. Its prevalence may be traced to insufficient clothing and bad food. During these months the death-rate was at its highest. The majority of deaths occurred amongst those who had remained outside the poor-house, living upon jungle leaves and herbs, and who came to the poor-house when it was too late to do anything to save their lives. Many such died within three days of coming to us.

Everything possible was done for the sick so far as medicine and suitable diet are concerned.

The hospital assistant, in my opinion had far too much work to do.

In the beginning straw was provided as bedding for the hospital patients, but the acting Civil Surgeon ordered this to be removed. This appeared to me to be unnecessary, as a separate shed for cooking had been erected.

In my opinion the arrrangements at the poor-house were as complete as possible, and the efforts put forth in this direction to relieve distress were highly successful. The majority of the people came to the poor-house as skeletons. They were not merely kept alive, but, with few exceptions, were turned out fit for work.

The death-rate for the whole period, as nearly as I am now able to say, was about 15 per cent. And with few exceptions the deaths were amongst old people.

In my opinion, so far as poor-houses are concerned, the same system would answer satisfactorily for the jungle people in any future famine.

The sale of food stuffs at a cheap rate was an inestimable help to the people. People came to buy from villages as far as 20 miles away. Those coming from long distance were only allowed to buy once a week, and not more than 8 pailies of *jowari* were sold to each family. The near villagers came every day, and were generally allowed to purchase one paili for each family.

It is quite possible to prevent the abuse of such shops in a district like the Melghat. It is a form of relief much appreciated by the people, as was evidenced by frequent expressions of gratitude for such help.

From this centre grain for sowing—*jowari*, maize, *kutki*, *kodo*, *sawan*—was distributed to the cultivators. Splendid crops of *kutki*, upon which grain the Kurku largely depends, were raised.

In addition to suggestions already made I would submit the following:—

1. That poor-house people be given some light work, whether useful or useless.
2. That some kind of *crèche* be opened in connection with relief works. Could this be done, the number of widows with large families who go into the poor-house would be greatly diminished.
3. That payment be made to labourers on relief works in grain instead of money.
4. That some measures be introduced dealing with professional beggars. Much of gratuitous relief was swallowed up in some parts by these people.
5. That measures be taken early to check the flooding of a province by outsiders. During the famine thousands of Central Provinces people entered the Berars by the Morsi road, branching off from here in the directions of Amraoti and Ellichpur. Much distress was caused by these people underworking the Beraris. Could they not have been turned back to the relief works in the Central Provinces?

In conclusion, a good deal of road work came under my notice during the famine. As I have much work to do, and much fever just now, I must be excused from saying more about it than that it answered its purpose well, and that Government relief roads were carried out at much less cost than the private roads.

Written statements of evidence and written answers to the Commission's questions sent in by voluntary witnesses, not orally examined by the Commission.

CENTRAL PROVINCES.

Written answers to the Commission's questions by KHAN SAHEB COWASJEE MEHERWANJEE HATTY-DAROO, *dated 6th April 1898.*

Khan Saheb Cowasjee Meherwanjee Hatty-Daroo.

Your notice to the Public, dated 12th January 1898, regarding evidence of witnesses from Central Provinces for the Famine Commission.

With reference to the above, I, Cowasjee Meherwanjee Hatty-Daroo, by caste Parsee, age 58 years, residence of nearly 21 years in Seonee, occupation merchant, patel of two villages, an Honorary Magistrate, Vice-President of Municipality and Vice-Chairman of Seonee District Council, a Member of General Committee of the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund, I was also a member and have officiated for a short period as Honorary Secretary of Central Provinces (Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund) Executive Committee in this district. I was also in charge of Famine Village Relief Work. I also carried on the work of embankment, wells and two small tanks at my own villages at a cost of R2,000 from Famine Loan Advances, and distributed a sum of R5,737 to 728 persons of 227 villages, from the Charitable Relief Fund. (If under this introduction any self-praise is considered, I beg to be excused to say that I am compelled to make this statement under the instruction of paragraph 3 of your notice above referred to.) Beg to state that I regret I did not receive a copy of famine question paper before I applied to you, hence the delay in replying the following questions:—

"As to the extent and severity of the distress."

*1. In Seonee Tehsil, *Barghat* and *Uglee* circles suffered the most, and in some extent *Koorai* and *Kaniwarra* circles came under its range.

In the Sarknadon Tehsil, *Dhooma*, Kedarpur, *Ghansore* and *Sarknadon*, circles were most severely, and *Chiri* and part of the Chhapparra circles were moderately, affected.

According to last census the population of Seonee District is 370,767, and I consider more than 200,000 persons actually suffered by the famine.

2. Due to successive failures of crops from past years, sometimes for want of rain, and at other times owing to excess of rain.

3. (*b*) Certainly the prices of food-grain were, during the later portion, much higher, and people have had no recollection of such high prices before.

4. The preceding seasons were also unfavourable, and previous to the failure of the 1896-97 crop the people were quite destitute by selling off all their possessions.

5. Yes; the population of the affected part were, before the distress, to certain extent in a fairly well-to-do circumstances. There is no particular section of the population dissimilar from the rest.

6. No; the agriculture in general all over the country depend mostly on timely and sufficient rain, condition of the soil, and its producing powers of different crops. There is nothing like irrigation to raise rabi crops, except garden produce from well irrigation here and there.

7. Generally the people had a reserve in shape of ornaments, mostly of silver and metallic pots and pans that formed their reserve stock for a year or two, with some stock-grain, but when the failure succeeded year after year for four consecutive years, that people had to part with whatever things they considered would fetch money, first by farming and lastly by selling, and this went to such an extent, that a regular trade sprung up amongst the *banias* of exporting gold and silver in bars and in ornaments to Bombay along with baser sort of old metal, mostly brass. Generally the cultivating class has such reserve as is stated above, but the labouring class is destitute of any such reserve, and consequently they were the first and mostly affected by the calamity.

8. So far as I have ascertained, the extent and severity of the recent distress surpassed all the former ones. On those occasions the people were not reduced to need the relief on a grand scale, as was necessitated in the last famine in this Province.

9. As to the extent of crop failure or the degree of distress, I have no statistics to give. The possession of resources and their ultimate exhaustion by the people I have explained in my answer to question No. 7, but this I cannot help bringing before the notice of the Commission, that during the short period I was acting as an Honorary Secretary to the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund Committee of Seonee Branch, I found out that, when the General Committee of the Charitable Fund at Nagpur asked our Committee to send an estimate of the required sum under the Object No. IV, Classes D and E, through some miscalculation only R25,000 were asked, and the Provincial Committee had kindly given the same, but the sum so kindly given was entirely inadequate to meet the real want of the district in providing the peasant cultivators to start their fresh life again. I may be excused for quoting the following from my report dated 11th June 1897, to the Honorary Secretary, Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund Committee, Nagpur, on the subject:—"In Seonee District, under the Object IV, Classes D and E, there are nearly 9,000 cultivators, and in giving them a fresh start in life by restoring them to their original position, would require a great deal of money, *i.e.*, at least 3 lakhs at the rate of R30 to R40 per head, but the sum so generously allotted to this district is unfortunately so small, that we could hardly do anything in bettering the peasant's position unless the Provincial Committee take compassion on our misfortune in aiding us by kindly reconsidering our case. Still we are in time yet for sowing the *kharif*, and what would be the blessings to the hundreds and thousands of hopeless people if they get a helping hand, when they consider themselves totally lost. Some consideration if kindly given to this, will be nothing but real blessing.

"I regret that unless immediate steps are not taken to remedy the evil, our case is hopeless."

I am thankful to say that after the report the Provincial Committee very generously came to our further assistance and sanctioned the very handsome grant of R5 9,000 more.

As to the sufficiency and economy of the relief measures.

23. Regarding the last portion of this question, I beg to say that the residence upon a relief work is mostly disliked by people, specially those who are engaged in agriculture, and have property in villages; and only for the sake of "distance test" to send them to a large work in a subdivision, I consider most prejudicial to the interest of Government as well as the peasant.

I would strongly recommend work in their own villages.

26. Because there was no work of manual labour existing anywhere in the district, where large crowd of people could be employed.

They made a tremendous rush over the relief work. In my opinion it was also due to the large period during which the famine extended, and gradually the people were reduced to a great strait, hence this sudden and large rush; and from the amount of wages they derived, and the very high price of grain ruling at the time, it is impossible to suppose that the rush was due to the liberality of terms of relief. For instance, a State relief work under my supervision was opened on 9th January 1897 at my village Bizawarra, about 2½ miles distance from the Seonee town. The work in question commenced with 40 people sent from the Seonee poor-house for light work. The wages given were as follows: man at one anna a day; woman 9 pies a day, and children at 6 and 3 pies a day; and from the following statement you will please observe how immediately there was an increase of labour from

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

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outside, and amongst them most of the labourers were able-bodied:

	People at work.		People at work.		People at work.
On the—		On the—		On the—	
9th January 1897	40	22nd January 1897	527	8th February 1897	162
10th ,, ,,	55	23rd ,, ,,	309	15th ,, ,,	143
11th ,, ,,	95	24th ,, ,,	402	22nd ,, ,,	139
12th ,, ,,	136	25th ,, ,,	338	1st March 1897	145
13th ,, ,,	210	On the 26th wages were increased, man one anna 3 pies, woman one anna, children from 9 to 3 pies.		8th ,, ,,	157
14th ,, ,,	260			15th ,, ,,	175
		On the—			
15th ,, ,,	345	26th January 1897	290	22nd ,, ,,	180
16th ,, ,,	356	27th ,, ,,	268	29th ,, ,,	165
17th ,, ,,	382	28th ,, ,,	268	5th April 1897	168
18th ,, ,,	401	29th ,, ,,	270	11th ,, ,,	173
19th ,, ,,	538	30th ,, ,,	245	When the work was finally closed.	
20th ,, ,,	571	31st ,, ,,	234		
21st ,, ,,	562	1st February 1897	205		

27. The "gratuitous relief" of cooked food was given in poor-houses, where residence was a condition of relief, and in children's kitchens, where residence was not the condition, and also money in village relief was given, but I prefer village relief started systematically.

28. There may have been an occasional deviation from the Code in giving relief, but in my opinion this is the best way of relieving people—more preferable than any other system.

31. To certain extent loans were given to agriculturists, and famine loan works started in some villages, and suspension of land revenue was also allowed in the districts, but to what extent I do not know.

32. Taking first the last-mentioned classes, the traders and artizans, and agricultural labourers. They will reach their former position as the time will go, but the land-owning class to a certain extent, and the cultivators and non-proprietory class to a great extent, will suffer in future years, and it is hardly probable that they will again see their former days, as prior to the Government relief last year, they have been entirely merged in the debts, and not only they will be required to pay the old accumulated debt, but for generations the interest on this debt will accumulate to such an extent, that they will find it next to impossible to get out of the debtors' hand free, unless the Government come to their immediate relief by starting agriculturists' banks on grand scale everywhere.

Even when they receive the Government relief, they were only able to utilise a part of their land.

I would most respectfully add for instance, supposing a tenant has a plot of 25 acres of arable land, and he has received R50 as *takavi*, as the Government would not, I am afraid, advance him more for seed-grain, etc., out of this, the man could not sow more than 5 or at the most 7 acres of land (with rabi crop), as the rate of seed during the sowing time last season was as high as R15 to R20 per khandi (of 280lbs.), and now the yield is taken to be an average of five-fold of the seed sown, and after deducting all the expenses and Government *jama* for the 25 acres, and the much reduced rates of different kinds of grain all over the country from R5 to R9 per khandi (owing to no exports), the poor tenant will hardly be able to start life afresh.

As to the arrangements existing for ascertaining the imminence of scarcity.

34. The existing arrangements are sufficient.

35. In this Province the staff of *putwaris* and Revenue officers are maintained by the State for ascertaining the cropped area and the condition of the crops.

36. Yes, to the greatest extent, the crop returns be relied on with regard (1) the area and kind of crop actually sown, (2) the extent to which sowing have failed: but I am sorry to say that when the report of a failure of an individual *field*, *village* or a *district* is made, there is no provision to give immediate help to the party to check all the future calamities. I am of humble opinion that if timely attention is paid to a single failed field, as it is reported, it will save the Government more money at the end. If such arrangements are beforehand generally made, even in time of drought famine, there will be less anxiety and cost to the State as the Famine then will not be so distressing as it is now.

As to the extent to which the prescription of the Provincial Famine Code have been departed from or have been found to be unsuitable.

39. State relief in this district were as follows:—

(1) Relief circles for labourers.
(2) Famine loans for improvements.
(3) Poor-houses.
(4) Kitchens attached to relief circles.
(5) Children's kitchens in different villages, and
(6) Village relief.

The measures of private relief were generally from the Charitable Relief Fund, also from the Scottish Mission and from well-to-do persons, under the following heads: clothing, etc., for the poor, maintenance of orphans, relief of respectable poor and relief to agricultural class; also a cheap grain shop was opened in the town for a short period for the needy.

40. Kindly refer my introductory note.

44. The relief work, which was started at Bizawarra, greatly assisted in saving many lives. The first batch of labourers, on their attaining fitness for light work, was received from the poor-house, Seonee. Considering the state of labourers and the quantity of work done, it is considered economical.

45. In the measures used during the time, I would strongly urge the abolishing of long "distant test" and to employ all the able-bodied men as soon as they are found without means of subsistence in their own village, on improvement work of the village. State to pay no cost for maintaining them, but only to advance famine loans freely in every village, and compel every landholder to do certain improvements in each field of the village; by this the able-bodied labourers will have no need of any kind of "relief work", and will assist the cultivators and save the Government lot of money and anxiety.

46. It is my humble opinion, with regard to "saving of human life" and to "economy", to immediately employ every person (able-bodied) in their own villages as far as possible, as suggested in my last paragraph, in answer to question No. 45, and during the distressed time Government only to start children's kitchens and provide for who are not capable to work in each village, and pay for these only.

48. The measures stated in my answers to questions Nos. 45 and 46, in my opinion, meet the approval of both A and B.

49. It is my humble opinion that the great mass of population directly depends on agriculture; soil in every village is said to be losing its producing powers; no one knows how this is, and nobody could direct how to improve it; the cultivator, on account of indebtedness, whatever he produces is the property of his money-lenders; in this way imperishable seed of famine producing is continually germinating from field to field and village to village, and unless this is properly eradicated by the proper landlord of the country (the Government), we will never get rid of famines.

I am sure that, if in ordinary times means are taken to increase the fertility and improvement of soil and making the cultivators independent of their money-lenders by starting in every province and branch in every district agriculturists' banks on grand scales, on one hand freely to advance money to every landholder on most reasonable interests, and on the other hand, compelling them to introduce all and every kind of improvements, on the ground of sanitation and public good, from village to village and year to year, until everything is perfectly accomplished, such as field embankments, drainage, improvement of soils, digging sufficient wells and tanks, public roads of importance, introduction of beneficial system from different districts and provinces of India, in shape of agricultural impliments and its management regarding preparation of soil, manure and seed, etc., will always prove more useful to reduce the famines.

As to Relief Work.

59. I consider from 25 to 30 able-bodied persons in ordinary times will be enough for digging a sufficiently sized tank in a village. The State ought not to pay for this, but money must be advanced to the proprietors and compel them to do the required work and return back the advances (in small instalments); by this the proprietors or the

cultivators will have to pay more attention to the supervision, as at the end he has to pay the money.

I do not think, if in ordinary time, the work of tanks, wells and embankments of fields are undertaken, the population of the village (including labourers) who have to attend to their own fields will ever care to come for such work even if it is at their doors.

Diggers of tanks, wells (and for embanking purposes), is a special profession, and they are to be got from different villages, so there is the least fear of the whole population of the village applying for the work.

60. I do not think the requirements of village tanks are altogether exhausted by the recent famine works. Every village, even of *rabi crops*, should have more than one tank of its own, to get some assistance in time of drought.

62. Yes, certainly, if constructed in ordinary times.

As to large and small works and the distance tests.

71 & 72. It is my humble opinion that if attention is given to my suggestions in answers to questions Nos. 45, 46 and 49, the distress even in time of general famine, owing to drought, will not be felt severe, and villages will be able to do all the requirements under the direction of Government, without the resort to large and small works, and the distant test, and at less cost to the State. If not, in order to reduce the acute distress (No. 71), it is advisable to provide relief works for the needy in such a place that they may be in a position to return every night to their villages. This would save the cost of accommodation, medical expenses, and extra supervision. (*a*) Five miles maximum and (*b*) it is a compulsory matter, people never like to leave their homes. (No. 72) Home works should be established as far as possible, and if this is not practicable they must be removed to relief camp.

76. Kindly refer to answer to question No. 26.

77. Yes, for instance, I have had some able-bodied labourers at Bizawarra. Relief workers, who were ordered to go to the large relief works at Bhamosee and Larknador, though expenses for going on this work were offered in advance, but they refused, consequently they were not allowed to remain on works at Bizawarra.

As to Gratuitous Relief.

148. 9·62 per cent. were placed on gratuitous relief from Indian Famine Charitable Fund, under the heading Agricultural classes, regarding relief to respectable poor, (1) in the town of Seonee and Larknador; (2) under heading Maintenance of orphans and clothing, etc., for the poor and infirms was provided from the Indian Charitable Fund; (3) gratuitous relief was given by Government in poor-houses, kitchens, relief centres, village to village relief, and starving wayfarers were fed by the Police Department; (4) private charity was distributed by Scottish Mission and other well-to-do gentlemen of the town, of which I have no statistics to give the actual percentage, at the period of maximum pressure.

149. Yes.

150. So far as I am aware of, the majority of persons gratuitously relieved were incapable of working on a relief work, many of them had relatives, but they were unable to support them, and they also had very little resources of their own.

151. Kindly refer to my answer to question No. 7.

161. The middle and high caste Hindu, when even reduced to poverty, will object to take cooked food. The peculiar instance of even receiving money from charity is objected to by the *kallar* caste as the person who is reduced to poverty, he receives such grant, is out-casted; of this I have personal experience while distributing the charity money.

Leaving apart cooked food, to get gratuity in any form is a stigma considered by the middle and high class of respectable natives.

161. No, it is considered meritorious to give alms to the needy and is given away irrespective of any other accommodation, hence one would find so many *Sadawarti* started in every well-to-do house or village.

163. Yes.

164. No, village relief is far more preferable; cooked food many will refuse and some will rather die without it.

165. According to the native points of views, Hindus generally should be allowed (except the low caste amongst them) the relief in the form of grain doles or money, as caste prejudice is to a great extent firmly rooted amongst them, and it is next to death to eat cooked food prepared by another caste than his own.

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166. Yes.

167. No gratuitous relief is given by the State in grain except cooked food provided in poor-houses and kitchens. In village to village relief is given in money, and I also prefer money giving to any other sort of relief.

168. In village relief they were paid at their own villages.

169. Looking to the temptation, very few cases indeed of extortion were detected. Regarding the other portion I have no knowledge of such practice.

171. Most of the children's kitchens were managed by the malguzars; also central kitchens were under official supervision, and all the money from Indian Charitable Relief Fund, by the well-to-do native gentlemen of the town and malguzars.

As to Poor-houses.

174. Yes regarding the first portion, and no regarding the last.

179. The Government spared no means in disposing of the poor-house inmates to the best of its ability, after keeping them for requisite period according to the physical state of the person; either they were sent on light or on relief work, and after full enquiries into their whereabouts and relations, many were sent to their homes.

180. So far as I am informed that the inmates, specially sickly and weak persons, were taken so much care that they were envied by the out-siders, and would never have received such kind treatment at their own houses.

182. For the first portion no, for the last yes.

184. Regarding the first portion yes, for the second portion no, and for the last portion yes.

As to Relief Kitchens.

193 & 194. Functions of relief kitchens are really most human and beneficial throughout, but unfortunately caste prejudice is their great obstacle and there are several mischievous elements attach themselves, even to children's kitchens and much more to the central kitchens, such as that the people are well fed by the Government, because they are to be sacrificed to a certain railway bridge, or that they will be emigrated to the ten districts, and such other absurd reports; besides this, the degradation and caste excommunication are matters to be considered over.

195. At least for the time they are in a position to earn their livelihood elsewhere, but village to village improvement system will do away with all these.

196. Only to those who were provided with tickets by the person in charge of the kitchens.

197. The kitchens were ordinarily placed under the direct charge of malguzars, patels and mukadum of the village; there were two such kitchens under me, and no waste or mis-application of food ever happened, because myself and my relations were supervising the same.

198. According to the prejudice of the labourers, to some cooked food and to others grain. Grain or money given to support the children, the most of the parents will cheerfully use it for the children.

As to loans to Cultivators and Landholders.

199. According to my information ₹85,462 advanced to 6,230 persons as follows:—

	₹		
For land improvement, the State advanced . .	8,850	to 22	persons.
Famine loans . . .	23,609	„ 77	„
Agriculturists' loan for seed-grain and cattle . .	53,003	„ 6,131	„

201. Of course regarding the last portion, I beg to say that in no other way the Government can spend more money so advantageously, and for the interest of the State more money ought to be given to this cultivating class; the present grant is a drop in the ocean.

202. From six to 12 years for land improvement; seven years for repayment of famine loans, one year for seed-grain, and two years for cattle.

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203. So far I know no advances were given to land owners and cultivators for purchase of food.

204. It is necessary to advance freely, specially in bad times, to land-owners and cultivators for purchase of food. If you wish to assist this class, pray assist them to the utmost; the more you assist, the more advantageous to the State. I am of opinion that the cultivators should never be forced to "the self-acting test" of acceptng work on a relief work.

205. Certainly, by doing so, less expenses will cost to the State at the end.

206. Such a large outlay is most necessary for the interest of the Government. To assist the cultivators is a proper and sure step to benefit the State. I am of humble opinion that at present 90 per cent. of land-owners and cultivators are under the clutches of money-lending classes, and the landholders and cultivators are only in name.

The cultivator going to the relief work will not mend matters. He will be supported for his bare necessity for the time being. But when the sowing time comes, if the *Sowkar* does not lend him (he will refuse only when the cultivator is in too much debt and possesses no property in land and cattle), Government must to some extent, otherwise the land must remain uncultivated, which will be a direct loss to the malguzar, and at the end indirect loss to the Government. So either the *Sowkar*, malguzar, or some well-to-do tenant (or the Government) to recover their debts, will assist the man to a certain extent, but what will be the result? When the crop is ready, any of the above mentioned creditors (except the Government) will silently bring in an attachment and sweep away everything, disregarding the Government *takavi* and other claims, so the cultivator is just as poor as he was before.

To overcome all these, I humbly advocate starting agriculturists' banks everywhere. Government can easily borrow a large sum for the purpose at less interest, and in these banks, *takavi* department be amalgamated.

As to suspensions and remissions of Land Revenue.

207. Suspension of Land Revenue and remission to some extent is given, but to what extent I do not know.

208. There are instances, that some of the malguzars realized the revenue which was suspended by the Government, but this is now ordered to be returned.

Law, I think, does not provide to stop this. A legal provision, if not already existing, is desirable.

209. Yes, but it is not enough to keep them from the relief works, as hardly any means of livelihood remained, till the harvesting of the next crop.

210. I am afraid not. It must be totally remitted and fresh help of advances of loans be allowed freely to them to start the new life.

212. You know now the real state of cultivators, and to charge them any interest, on the suspended rent, is to throw them more to the mercy of the money-lenders.

214. In such cases immediate remissions should be granted.

215. I have no statistics to prove from Court records to what extent the private indebtedness of the land-owning and cultivating classes has been increased through the famine, but if proper inquiries were made, it will be found out that nearly 90 per cent. of the property is mortgaged. From the following instance you will please observe that all the assistance from *takavi* loans and the Charitable Fund, so generously poured in the country, was not enough for every one to sow his land. Yet everywhere most of the land was sown, so it is evident that this could not have been done without borrowing to a great extent.

According to the last census; in this district, there were land-owning and cultivating class. Now out of the above number, only twenty-two persons received R8,850 for land improvement, and to seventy-seven persons R23,689 were advanced, from the famine loans also for land improvement, and to 6,131 persons the sum of R53,003 were advanced for seed-grain and cattle.

The real assistance which 6,131 persons received in famine time of R53,003, to this if the amount of R1,24,748-6-9 to 19,249 (so generously given by the British nation, may the Almighty Lord reward their good deed—really we have no sufficient words to adequately thank them for their kindness) persons be added, the total sum will be R1,77,751-6-9 amongst 25,380 persons.

Now you will please see that from the Government loan for seed-grain (which is to be repaid within a year) R8-10-3 comes per head, and from the Charity Fund R6-6-10 per head.

Now in this R8-10-3 and R6-6-10, how many pairs of bullocks and what quantity of seed-grain can be purchased.

Regarding the generous gifts, by which the unfortunate Seonee was not better off, I beg to quote here, for your information, from my Report submitted to the Honorary Secretary, Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund, Central Provinces, Nagpur, dated the 11th June 1897: "Though at first it was resolved (by our Committee) to give a sum of R8-10 and R12 respectively to each individual peasant under Object No. IV, Class "D and E," but at the time of distribution there were too many applicants who were in actual need. Therefore the amount was reduced to R2 to R8 per head, but notwithstanding all these microscopic calculations and cheese-paring distribution, thousands of people who had gathered round the distributing circles days before, in anticipation of relief, and who during the day burnt under scorching sun without proper food, and even in some places with scanty water, it was a pity to see such lamenting sight as was shown by the disappointed people who could not get anything whatsoever.

* * * * * * *

"The Government officials could not mete out the required *takavi* to every one, and rejected applications were referred to the Charity Committee, and they would reject the applications under the pretext that their applications did not come under their category." "Some respectable persons of large holding, actually tears in their eyes, thankfully refused the sum, when our Committee offered them from R10 to R12 from the Charity Fund, as the sums were simply inadequate for the holdings."

I sincerely hope that my above statement will give the Commission some idea whether the borrowing cultivators are on the actual point of ruin or not.

As to the use made of forests.

216. Free removal of firewood and grass from the neighbouring forests of Seonee town, Chhapparra town, and from *Narbada* and *Dhooma* ranges (1), also suspension of realization of commutation and grazing dues in *Dhooma*, *Narbada* and *Uglee* ranges (2), free removal of State and private forest edible produce throughout the Seonee District were allowed during the famine (3).

219. Mohowa, ashar, tendo, bhilwa, goolar, zamoor, ber and different kinds of roots.

As to orphans.

220. The best means to relieve the State from the expenses of maintaining the orphans is (1) to be made over to private individuals who are in need and will promise to take care of them, if not to Missions, (2) parents of many orphans have either died or emigrated to the Tea District, and T. D. L. S. Association may be asked to take charge of these orphans.

Except infirm, who should be handed over to village, where village improvement is already introduced, and Government should provide for them.

221. It all depends on the condition made with the private orphanages, when orphans were made over to them. If no conditions were made, Government should offer a lump sum, and entirely make over the orphans to different orphanages, if not, these poor orphans may be disposed of as suggested in No. 220.

As to private Charitable Relief as auxiliary to State Relief.

222. No.

223. No.

224. I am of opinion that the statement of second object regarding orphans is satisfactory, and don't like any modification.

225. Yes.

226. No. I do not suggest any measures. The management of distributing charity under Object III is conducted under Government officials and members of the Committee, therefore no likelihood of overlapping on the Fund.

227. Yes.

228. In the way this shop was opened at Seonee, it will not interfere in any way with the private trade.

A shop for a short period started in Seonee town. Tenders were asked from the traders; and whose rates were reasonable, he was asked to supply so many seers, *i. e.*, below the prevailing market rates, to persons who had tickets from the Committee, and the difference was paid from the Indian Charitable Relief Fund.

229. There was no effect by this shop over the trade of any value.

230. Yes please, by all means.

231. With reference to what class of agriculturists should generally be helped under Object IV, I beg to quote from my Report, dated 11th June 1897, to the address of the Honorary Secretary, Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund, Central Provinces, Nagpur: "Further, I beg most emphatically and clearly to bring to your Committee's notice that a most deserving and proper class of people are now considered only the men under Object IV, Class D and O. But the peasant Class 'C' has been left off entirely unattended, because for the comparatively larger amount each require, individually for his holding, and who truly, for the welfare of the entire district, should mostly be supported, for reason stated; they are the very backbone of the peasant class.

"They labour themselves and employ other labourers. They have the largest holdings next to their malguzars, and some equal to them. Four years' distress has passed upon them equally, though some of the malguzars are said to be rich, but most have nothing left to advance.

"The peasant Class 'C' are already under debt to the *Sowkar* who could not advance them any more now.

"A good extent of the land of the district is under their cultivation; if they fall this year, and sure they are to fall, the distress will be great and no amount of money in future will raise them."

I hope to be excused for saying—that why to wait for famine time and then to spend millions of rupees on relief and other works.

The greatest source of State revenue is derived from the agricultural class, then why not in good time have agriculturists' banks at once started. After adopting safeguard measures, to introduce on grand measure village to village improvement system. If this is followed, there will be no general famine; by this system even famine owing to drought will not be severe.

232. I am altogether against relieving agriculturist class from any charity funds.

They should never be reduced to such state; the proper help to this class should be from the *takavi* advances or agriculturists' banks, to enable them to sow all their lands.

233. Yes, to those who are very needy.

234. Every pie given from the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund, as supplementary to Government relief, was a real blessing to every recipient in different branches of relief.

235. According to Report of the Central Provinces Provincial Executive Committee of the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund from February to October 1897. Total sum of R29,08,879-5-7 as follows:—

	R	a.	p.
Under Objects Nos. I and II	1,85,323	1	11
,, No. III	1,21,063	7	1
,, ,, IV	26,52,492	12	7
TOTAL RUPEES	29,08,879	5	7

236. Altogether 650,132 persons. The following statement shows the number of persons relieved:—

	Persons.
Under Object Nos. I and II	257,477
,, No. III	64,386
,, ,, IV	328,269
TOTAL	650,132

237. Clothing, blankets and food supplied under Object Nos. I and II was most popular and evoked the greatest gratitude, and this untold blessing was owing only to British rule and British nation.

238. Clothings, doles of money and cheap grain shop under Object No. III.

239. Kindly refer to my answer to question No. 232, but if no provision is made under *takavi* advances, to help the broken-down agriculturists, by all means assist the class by spending bulk of the fund. It is not only assisting the agriculturists, but also the labourers, as the agricultural class always assist indirectly the labouring class also.

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240. Most certainly, but kindly refer to my No. 215.

As to the pressure of population.

268. With due deference to Malthusian law of the increase of human race as 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, while the increase of substance at 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, I would respectfully beg to say that the question be left to its remote future. We are yet not in a position to exactly know what nature has reserved in store, and henceforward how it will affect increase of human race and substance.

270. I am of opinion that emigration of labourers from this district is a real curse for future to the agiculturists. There are already many emigrated to tea plantations, and still many going, and many have died, and their want will be badly felt hereafter, because without proper number of labourers, agriculture will never improve, therefore sooner this emigation is stopped the better for the country.

Great difference between England and India is that in the former country most of the work is done by machinery, where, on account of coal and other resources, it is cheaper to work, whereas in India, labour being cheap, more hands at work are always in demand.

271. In India the time is far distant for the people to understand the value of the question.

272. We must try to do good to the best of our understanding and leaving the rest to nature. Kindly see my reply to question No. 268.

As to the ordinary food of the people.

273. In the town and district, well-to-do artizans and labourers could afford to have wheat, rice, masoor, gram, oorud and mung; also inferior sort of grain, such as kodo and kutki, where the family is large.

274. This consists, if the family is small and where the grain is cheap, of solid food, of boiled rice with dál and bread and vegetable, and whenever possible meat, relished with pickle and pepper (baked thin crisp biscuits as a sort of condiment), with curd or whey curry and milk, who could afford them, the same morning and evening. Where the family is large this is preceded by a sort of porridge of kodo or kutki, made by coarsely pounding the grain and mixing the same with water, the quantity of the water being dependent upon the means of the family to put in the quantity of grain by which the solid food is lessened. With the poor it is quite different.

Almost all the well-to-do artizans and labourers principally in town, after their day's work, resort to a country liquor shop for their ordinary "peg".

275. They substitute one of the grains mentioned in No. 274. In scarcity people would resort to any kind of uncultivated seed, herb or root.

276. Kodo and kutki.

277. If in need they would accept everything and anything.

278. In two children's kitchen, under my supervision, rice, dál and wheat were used with whey and jaggery.

279. In my kitchen house, twice a day in the morning rice and dál prepared in ghee and vegetable given, and in the evening same thing on wheat-flour bread and dál with some vegetable given. Rice was sometimes cooked with whey or curd; occasionally instead of dál and ghee, they would (the children) prefer rice with *gur*. The quantity for each individual was used as prescribed in the schedule.

As to food-stocks and prices.

282. The high level of price was due to failure of harvest, and at the beginning of famine, export of grains to other places.

284. The grain-dealers did a good business in both ways in exporting and importing grain, as necessity occurred.

285. The town people and villagers having no stock of their own, purchased their things always at the nearest market rate.

287. Before the high level price there was a great exportation done by the trade, but afterwards it was imported from outside.

288. There was no such business done in grain by which anybody made his fortune, but the grain-dealers drove a good trade as is usual with them. The ruling high prices did

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not effect their ordinary profits, nor it enabled them to make their fortune.

289. Yes, most of the grain godowns were depleted, and there remained a very low stock.

290. In my opinion very small stock was left with the cultivators and land-holders.

291. Yes.

293. Reasons for such diminution is less produce, export and general famine.

295. I have already explained in answer to question No. 215.

296. Agriculturists and labouring classes.

297. Owing to failure of harvest agriculturists could not employ labour, consequently everywhere employment of labour has fallen down.

298. The reason of wages of labourers, artizans and servants not going up was simply this, that in this district there was no work of any kind in existence. Kindly refer my answer to question No. 26.

302. Necessity compelled the people to sell everything for their subsistence, though they could not sell at half of the original price.

When the famine was staring with all its might, they sold everything they possessed for what they would fetch, irrespective of high or low price. Please refer to my reply to question No. 7.

303. (1) It entirely depends on conditions made with the importers; (2) in such famine time it is my humble opinion Government ought not to have any consideration for private trade; (3) in fact, to relieve millions, Government must take upon itself to go in communication with British Ambassadors of different European and others Courts, and import grain at its own cost, and sell here at cost price during the distressed time.

305. Why only to depend on countries outside India under Viceroy only. America, Russia and Japan are the principal countries which could assist India in time of famine with their produce. Yes, when the stocks of food-grains were unusually low and prices generally very high, it is advisable to import such grains from countries mentioned above, in case we cannot get the required quantity in different parts of India or Burma, and to sell at cost price, and I am of humble opinion that this is the only course to lower the high prices in famine time, and the advantages would be that Government by undertaking this, would not go to any loss and will meet the wants of the millions famine striken.

Disadvantages only (1) interference with private trade for a while, but I don't understand why this should be called "interference with private trade," when the interest of whole population is at stake; (2) it will take time (till whole grain is sold) to refill the Government coffers.

Conclusion.

In conclusion I respectfully beg to remark that the great mass of the population only depend on agriculture, as there are very few other industries in existence, so if the agriculture is failed at any time, the whole country has to suffer; therefore to assist this department is to protect the whole population from every calamity.

I am of humble opinion that in future Government should, as far as possible, reserve some grain to be useful in time of need; but to buy for the sake of storage, would be a heavy loss to the State. Therefore the old system of recovering the revenue in kind should, at least in part, as a trial, be introduced, specially in wheat and other produce of great demand in England. This will not only answer our purpose of storage and needful in time of need, also as the Government has to sell consols for millions of rupees, and pay discount over them. So for this purpose, if wheat and other produce is exported to England there would be a large saving by way of discount, besides a large profit will be secured by sale. By this practice not only this, but a certain amount of grain being kept in reserve in India, will be very handy in time of famine, and will be the proper source to improve the cultivation of India.

Written answers to the Commission's questions by RAI SAHEB SETH MOHAN LALL, *Khurai, Central Provinces.*

Rai Saheb Seth Mohan Lall.

* The whole of the Saugor District and its entire population was affected. But in the whole of the Khurai Tahsil and in nearly one-third of the Banda Tahsil, the distress was very severe and exists to some extent even to the present day.

2. The severity of the distress was due to local failure of the timely rains and of the harvests for four consecutive years. The consequence was that there became famine of grain, and prices were abnormally high. The severity of the distress was helped by the Revised Settlement made, at this very period, in the hope of a full crop of 16 annas (that the Revised Settlement expected every year in future). The new assessment made would have been heavy even if the crops were full 16 annas every year, as the said settlement expected. The proprietors had to sink a good deal of capital in the shape of seed grain advances, and many could not obtain sufficient loan either from money-lenders or from Government, to keep their villages in proper cultivation, and hence much of the area could not be sown (for want of resources). They had to dispose of their property to meet agricultural requirements including subsistence of themselves and their family and were pinched even for food.

The cultivators in their turn, as long as they could, maintained themselves either by disposing of their property or by borrowing. But when they had no property left with them and when they could not obtain loan of money, many of them deserted their land and went away, some of them died. The lands of those who went away, leaving the village, and of those who died, were left unsown (and turned fallow). The houses of these people fell down during rains. The average population and the average area of the villages of the Khurai Tahsil, which is under crop, would now perhaps be half of what they were before famine. The average number of cattle would be perhaps half of what it was formerly.

3. Timely rains have been failing consecutively from 1892 to 1896, and there have been heavy rains in the latter part of the agricultural seasons, and the result was rust, etc. Owing to the failure of crop in 1892-93, grain had to be imported from other parts, by means of railways. The prices were therefore abnormally high. The successive failure of the harvests was the cause of high prices which were rising higher and were higher than those of the past famines.

4. Up to the time of the failure of the rains, the average crop of the three years preceding the famine has been only 12 annas.

6. The agriculture of the Khurai Tahsil is mainly dependent on timely and sufficient rainfall, owing to the absence of facilities for irrigation and want of bunds in the fields. If the fields be bunded, the agriculture would not suffer much for short and untimely rains.

7. Formerly, the circumstances enabled the people to have some reserve of grain or money for their support in the event of the failure of one crop, but now they have no reserve of grain or money for their support in the event of failure of one or more crops, as they are now living from hand to mouth.

8. The late famine was more severe than the past famines.

9. The extent of crop failure, the degree of distress, and the absence of resources on the part of the people, was underestimated. If the estimate were a correct one, Government would not have realized full 16 annas Kista (Land Revenue) in 1894-95, and half of this in 1895-96 (under the Revised Settlement scale) which, compared with the scale of the last settlement, would be equal to that of two years. Besides this, other taxes were also in operation. There would not have been enhancement in the assessment made under the Revised Settlement, nor would there have been increase under other heads.

32. The land owning and cultivating classes of the Khurai Tahsil may recover their former position within 15 or 20 years, provided the crops do not fail and the Government continues to give every kind of requisite aid to the people. The rent on the present cropped area should be fixed after deducting the rent of land now turned fallow from what has been under the new assessment.

34. No. In each pargana, under the control of the Local Board, there should be a committee consisting of the Malguzars and other respectable inhabitants of the locality,

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

with Patwari as secretary, for ascertaining and reporting failure of rainfall and crops.

35. Yes. Patwari should not be transferred without any special reason. Because a Patwari who has been long in a locality knows it better than a new one.

36. No.

37. In my opinion the returns should be obtained both after the crops have been sown and after the harvest.

38. Yes.

81. Yes.

82. Yes. In cold and rainy season, blankets and beddings should be given.

160. No.

165. The social and caste feelings of the people are degradation and expulsion from caste.

167. In the shape of money dole. In my opinion partly in grain and partly in cash.

201. If the relief from charity fund were not given one-third of the area which is now under crop, could not be sown and about one-third of the cultivators now existing would have become either coolies or beggars. This relief has rendered a good deal of help in keeping cultivation as it was timely given at the commencement of the agricultural year. It proved useful for both Kharif and Rabi crops.

202. Part of the *takavi* advances were paid back to Government in the shape of Kista (Land Revenue), and whatever was left after paying Kista (Land Revenue) proved proportionately useful (to the cultivating classes). The period of recovery is three years and it carries with it interest at 8 annas per cent. per mensem.

In my humble opinion greater amount should be advanced and the period of recovery should be spread over 12 years and the rate of interest should be two-thirds of what it is now. These advances should be made at the beginning of the agricultural year, so as to enable the agriculturists to buy cattle, seed grain, etc. The amount should be advanced according to the status of the proprietors and cultivators.

215. The indebtedness among the proprietors, and cultivators has enormously increased. About 75 per cent. of these are involved to an extent which would result in their ultimate ruin. There are about 25 per cent. of these who are involved proportionately to their status. I had with me about 12,500 maunds of grain and ₹40,000 and I had to sink all this grain and money in the agricultural industry during the last famine.

230. To render the help effective, relief to broken-down agriculturists should be given from Charitable Fund at the commencement of the agricultural year.

Rai Saheb Seth Mohan Lall.

233. In my humble opinion, there are about one-third of the cultivating class, to whom *takavi* advances alone will be sufficient, one-third to whom both *takavi* and relief from Charitable Fund will do, and one-third to whom only gratuitous relief from Charitable Fund will be quite enough. If these measures of relief be adopted, the agriculturists will be able to pull on with agriculture pretty well.

45. In my humble opinion the following relief measures may be adopted :—

(1) Gratuitous relief should be given to those from whom no labour can be exacted or expected, such as the blind, the lame, the old, the sickly and the emaciated, and to *pardanashin* ladies who cannot go out on works.

These should be paid a monthly allowance.

(2) Statutory loans (*takavi*) should be given to Malguzars and cultivators without interest.

The amount should be recovered as follows :—

(1) Nothing should be recovered for the first three years. After three years the recovery in the case of Malguzars, should be spread over twelve years, by means of instalments, and in the case of a cultivator, the recovery should be spread over 16 years and the payments to be made by means of instalments.

If these measures be adopted, there would neither be any hardship to the Malguzars or cultivators in repaying the amount, nor any difficulty to Government in making the recovery.

If these loans be advanced, they will improve the land and its productive power as they will give every facility to the cultivating class for bunding up their fields, excavating tanks, etc., for irrigation purposes, etc. This will increase the power of resisting future famines, and would obviate the necessity of opening relief works by the State.

If these measures remain in operation, even when there are good crops, there would always be enough of work for the labouring classes, and land will go on progressing. Such Government Officers as Tahsildars should ascertain whether the money thus advanced is utilized in the proper way in improving the land. If one be found deviating from this rule, he should be made to repay the amount advanced to him without any delay.

Written statement of evidence by MR. NAND LAL, *late Head Master, High School, Raipur (now at Jabalpur).*

Mr. Nand Lal.

In compliance to instructions conveyed in your letter No. 346, dated the 9th March 1898, I have the honour to submit a statement required under paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Public Notice issued by the Commission.

I am a resident of Saugor, Brahmin by caste and a pensioner. My age is about 55 years. I am a malguzar of the Saugor District, malguzari business being a hereditary business of our family. I had several occasions to help people who although not affected with a calamity, like the present, were yet suffering from individual failures of the crop under the law of rotation or cyclic changes that effect the people and their crop. In my younger days I often accompanied my venerable old father, who was then living and managing the landed property, and I remember how he helped the tenants in the scarcity and famine of 1868-69. In 1878-79 also, when I was Deputy Inspector of Schools at Hoshangabad, I had occasion to witness the sufferings and the attempts made by malguzars of the district to help their tenants. During recent famine I myself had to render the required help to my tenants and servants, and it was not until I was totally ruined by the successive failures of crops that such of them as had no means of living became helpless. A very large capital of ours has been sunk in making successive advances for seed and cost of cultivation, and we have been paying the Government *jamma*, while we could realise nothing from our tenants during years of bad harvests, for although the famine was officially declared in 1896, we, in the Saugor District, and especially those among us whose villages are situated in the Khurai Tehsil, have been suffering from rust and blight, hail-storm and drought since 1891-92. In the report of 1894-95 the condition of the entire province is thus briefly reported on.

"This is the third bad season for wheat and the second for linseed which these provinces have experienced in succession. Much loss has also been sustained in connection with the autumnal harvest.

"The decrease of 252,803 acres in the cropped area and the resulting increase of 304,994 acres under current fallow are the natural consequences of the poor seasons of the past few years."

Before being able to point out with effect how urgent was the necessity of relief and how sadly it was delayed, I beg to bring to your kind notice the state of the Central Provinces before the breaking out of the sad calamity of distress which the provinces have just passed through.

From the figures of the Central Provinces Administration Reports, it will be seen that the profits of the people from trade were as follows:—

	1889-90.	1890-91.	1891-92.	1892-93.
	R	R	R	R
Export .	3,99,70,868	4,59,21,789	6,08,30,048	6,08,94,592
Import .	2,72,10,981	3,20,36,185	4,06,51,284	4,06,67,274
	1,27,60,887	1,38,55,704	2,01,78,764	2,02,27,318

The balance to the credit of the provinces was on an average ₹1,67,63,168. The total Government revenue was in 1891-92:—

	R
Imperial	67,33,747
Provincial	81,87,791
Local	11,14,154
TOTAL .	1,60,35,689

Mr. Nand Lal.

These figures do not include the income from Salt, Municipality and Local Board. The income from salt, as given in the Review of the Progress of Central Provinces published by Mr. Fuller, Settlement Commissioner, in 1892, is shewn to be R33,66,487. Add to this the receipts of Municipality and Local Boards :—

	1891-92. R
Income from salt	33,66,487
Municipality	21,21,363
Local Board	2,57,160
TOTAL	57,45,015

The profits of trade as shown above were thus all absorbed in paying the Government demands on different accounts. Figures of trade or rather the balance to the credit of the Provinces gave in 1891-92 R2,02,27,318 and the Government revenue from all sources amounted to R2,17,80,704.

The income or profits from trade were thus entirely to the benefit of the Government. The State arrangements, railways and roads transformed the produce of the land into cash at high prices, and received the whole of the balance left to the credit of the provinces, by a system of Land Revenue and taxes which left no savings to the people. The quantity of food-grain exported every year will be seen from the figures given in the table below :—

Year.	Total produce (food-grain).	Seed of the next year.	Export.	Balance left for consumption.	Population.	Quantity required at famine relief rates.
	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.		Rate.
1890-91	4,706,104,316	667,013,400	681,352,000	4,039,090,916	9,568,964 (Population of surveyed area), *vide* the Revenue II.	Man 1½ lbs.
1891-92	4,501,225,302	713,992,880	1,218,431,920	2,568,800,502		Woman 1 lb. Child ¾ lb. 4,142,087,840.
1892-93	5,117,995,961	766,219,280	821,554,000	3,530,222,681		
1893-94	5,091,136,894	760,125,600	738,408,960	3,592,602,334		(*vide* page 11 of the Review of Central Provinces Progress by Mr. Fuller).
1894-95	4,447,872,944	733,291,440	437,446,400	295,845,040		
1895-96	4,102,396,822	703,637,120	291,619,840	3,107,139,862		

	lbs.
This table shows that the Central Provinces has been producing an average	4,855,365,443
And the quantity required for the population of the surveyed area (9,568,964 souls) on an average, as given by Mr. Fuller in his Review of the Central Provinces Progress, page 11	4,142,087,840
This leaves a balance of rupees and seed required for fields	lbs. 713,777,603 / R72,68,37,790

This shows that the export trade which was going on in the country at the rapid rate was drawing away the food-grain required for the daily consumption. In 1877 the export figures reached the highest point in the North-Western Provinces and there was famine in 1878-79. We find the same result in the Central Provinces. The produce of the field was just sufficient for the maintenance of the people and seed required for the area under crop, and the export trade was drawing away not the surplus quantity but the quantity required for the maintenance of the people, and before the famine, the export had reached its highest limit 1,218,431,920 lbs. against the average of eight years, 809,375,788 lbs.

This traffic raised the prices of food which had been rising as shown in statement of the question No. 3 (*b*).

The granaries of the people were exhausted under competitive trade, and money had gone into Government treasury, what was then left to the people was a quantity of food barely sufficient to meet their wants, with high prices. And the position of the people before famine was as below :—

	Year.	Food-grain left for consumption for whole provinces.	Prices. Saugor.	Damoh.	Jabalpur.	Mandla.
Before famine.	1889-90	3,496,415,274	15·76	18·0	16·25	17·0
	1890-91	4,039,090,916	14·0	18·0	14·75	17·0
	1891-92	256,880,502	13·0	17·0	13·0	17·0
	1892-93	3,530,222,681	13·0	17·0	13·25	16·0
	1893-94	3,592,602,334	14·0	17·0	13·0	16·0
During famine.	1894-95	3,277,135,104	12·0	12·0	16·0	19·0
	1895-96	3,107,139,862	11·8	12·0	13·0	16·50

The new settlement came into operation in the year noted below and the revenue was raised as below :—

	Revenue demand with cesses and rates in settlement.		Revenue demand after settlement.	
	R		R	
In Jabalpur	6,32,366	(1892-93)	10,13,525	(1894-95)
„ Saugor	4,79,975	(1892-93)	5,35,985	(1894-95)
„ Damoh	2,86,105	(1892-93)	4,32,616	(1894-95)

And Government had not been able to realise their full demands as will be seen from figures given in the table attached (No. IV).

This shows that ever since the new settlement came into operation, it has been realising the current demands as well as the new enhancement, but it has not been able to do so and amount almost equal to the enhancement effected have always been in arrears, and in Saugor they had not been able to realise the revenue according to old demands as detailed below :—

Saugor.

Years.	Balance of previous years. R a. p.	Balance of current years. R a. p.
1893-94	8,028 12 10	3,64,454 12 8
1894-95	2,99,316 12 4	24,123 1 3
1895-96	2,05,016 6 4	1,17,047 6 10
		5,05,625 4 9

Damoh.

Years.	Balance of previous years. R a. p.	Balance of current years. R a. p.
1893-94	70 0 0	2,29,575 8 4
1894-95	2,24,631 10 11	2,31,383 1 8
1895-96	1,56,335 9 3	1,59,577 14 8

Jabalpur.

Years.	Balance of previous years. R a. p.	Balance of current years. R a. p.
1893-94	...	1,06,001 8 8
1894-95	8,206 12 0	3,76,477 10 0
1895-96	3,18,922 8 4	3,10,399 6 1

In 1891-92.

The figures of previous year's and current year's balances are :—

	On account of previous year. R a. p.	On account of present year. R a. p.
Saugor	74 5 6	18,595 1 0
Damoh	...	921 11 0
Jabalpur	458 4 0	1,417 6 8

No further proof is needed to show that the settlement was a failure, that people were impoverished by export trade that raised the prices of food, and were starving or living from hand to mouth, when the failures of crops had taken place, and if export trade and Government revenue had not exhausted their resources, *i.e.*, if trade and Government rents were stopped during the years of loss from harvest, there would never have been such a calamity, and frequent famines

in India are due to export trade and Government demands that are rising with the export trade.

And provisions of the Famine Code were observed, but not applied in time. It is said in the report of Famine Commission, 1880, Part I, page 37, paragraph 77, Famine :— The people engaged on relief works were published in weekly issues of the *Pioneer* and numbered between 5 and 6 lakhs of people throughout the provinces and ten times as much must have been supported and helped by the charity of the people.

The irrigated area is only 4 per cent. of the entire area under crop, and the average yield of crop (as shown in Statement III) comes to be about 10 annas, thus :—

Wheat 10·06 annas (taking 16 annas to represent the average crop).			
Grain and pulse	9·56	ditto	ditto.
Linseed	8·02	ditto	ditto.
Rice	10·40	ditto	ditto.
Cotton	10·99	ditto	ditto.
Juwar	9·51	ditto	ditto.
Kodon	9·52	ditto	ditto.
Sugarcane	11·80	ditto	ditto.
Til	9·70		
Average about 10 annas.			

The 16-anna produce per acre recorded by Mr. Fuller, late Commissioner of the Settlement in the Central Provinces, in his Review of the Progress of the Central Provinces is as below :—

	lb
Rice	560 per acre.
Wheat	680 do.
Oil-seed	273 do.
Cotton	65 do.
Sugarcane	2,245 do.
Other grains	380 do.

The 10-anna crop under each head will be about—

	lb
Rice	350
Wheat	425
Oil-seed	170
Cotton	40
Sugarcane	1,403
Other grains	240

This is about the average yield of 10 years. The estimate formed on the basis of these rates of people's income on the area under crop from 1890-91 to 1895-96 is recorded in my Statements No. V and No. V (*b*).* It will be seen from it and from another statement * comparing the average income with Government demands that both malguzars and tenants were not earning sufficient to meet their family expenses and pay the Government demands and debts. They had to make good out of the average crop of 10 annas, and as a result of this both malguzars and tenants were already deeply involved in debt, when the new settlement came into operation effecting an enhancement of about 60 per cent. which, including cesses, rates, Patwari and Muccadum charges, fell about 70 per cent. higher than the old rates; this also had the effect of raising the prices. The prices of food-grain had by western competition been rising, and granaries which used to be full had been exhausted long before the scarcity came to operate. A list given in Statements * 3 (*b*) will show how the prices have been steadily rising until they bordered on the famine limits by the increase of Government demands which, if compared with the rates of three years back will stand as below :—

Name.	1863-64.	1893-94.	Increase.
	R	R	Per cent.
Land Revenue	52,76,513	69,22,222	...
Stamp	3,77,878	17,52,139	364
Excise	7,27,539	27,93,669	264
Forest	79,582	11,34,475	1,326
Registration	.....	1,21,704	...
Assessed Taxes, etc.	2,74,009	4,84,755	77
Miscellaneous, including all other sources.	1,95,359	25,77,487	1,172
Total	69,30,880	1,57,86 451	
Deduct Land Revenue	52,76,513	69,22,222	
From all other sources	16,54,367	88,64,229	

This, in no mistakeable terms, shows that, even if permanent settlement were granted, the revenue of Government will in no way be affected by it, for what is lost in the shape of Land Revenue is more than made up by demands from other sources, and to tax the resources of the people from both sides, is to plunge the provinces into an eternal state of impoverishment.

The Government share, if decided on the average of rate recommended by the Famine Commission, *i. e.*, $\frac{3+7}{2}=5$ per cent. of the gross outturn, will, according to the above calculations, be as follows :—

Rice 10-anna crop	$\frac{350}{20}$	= 17½ lb. or 8¾ seers.
Wheat do.	$\frac{425}{20}$	= 21¼ lb. or 10⅝ seers.
Oil-seed do.	$\frac{170}{20}$	= 8½ lb. or 4¼ seers.
Cotton do.	$\frac{40}{20}$	= 2 lb. or 1 seer.
Sugarcane do.	$\frac{1,403}{20}$	= about 70 lb. or 35 seers.
Other grains 10-anna crop	$\frac{240}{20}$	= 12 lb. or 6 seers.

Now, in order to keep the prices within the reach of the poorest purchaser, it is necessary that the prices of food-grain should be kept at a considerable distance from the famine rates, at least 100 per cent. above the rates at famine time. The present famine rates have shown that under the existing impoverished state of the provinces, prices less than 12 seers have plunged the country into famine, and prices of all kinds of food-grain taken together should be at least 24 seers per rupee, and settlement prices ought, in no case, to have been less than this average. Now, if the prices of food-grain in ordinary years be taken to remain at a distance of the following rates from one another, then taking wheat at 24 seers a rupee, rice will be about 14, gram 25, juar, kodon, etc., 30 seers, and linseed 12 seers, equal to $\frac{1018}{20}$ =average 20 seers per rupee. Calculating at this rate, the value of the above share of Government will be about—

	R a. p.		R a. p.
Rice	0 10 0	Cotton	0 6 5
Wheat	0 7 1	Other grain	0 6 5
Oil-seed	0 5 8	Taking sugarcane at above 15 seers per rupee.	2 5 4

If we apply these rates, say, in case of Jabalpur, the Government share, according to Famine Commissioner's rates, will be—

	Area.		1892-93.	Total Government revenue.
	Acres.		R a. p.	R a. p.
Rice	197,672	at	0 10 0	=1,23,545 0 0
Wheat	465,314	at	0 7 1	=2,05,998 6 2
Gram and pulses	118,467	at	0 7 1	=52,446 5 3
Oil-seed { Linseed / Til }	58,075 / 37,031	at	0 5 8	=33,683 6 0
	95,106			
Other food-grains	174,406	at	0 6 5	=69,944 1 2
Cotton	15,997	at	0 6 5	=6,415 7 5
Sugarcane	851			=1,985 10 8
All others (at about 25 per cent. less than the average food-grain for)	104,843	at	0 5 8	37,131 14 4
	11,71,805			5,31,150 3 0

And Jabalpur District, before the new settlement, and its friend the famine, was paying ₹5,89,981-9-9, that is, ₹58,831-6-9 more than the average rates prescribed by the Famine Commissioners in 1878-79. This shows that there was no necessity for further enhancement; on the contrary, as rates pressed hard on ordinary tenants, the rent and revenue ought to have been reduced, but instead of doing so, the new enhancement fixed the Government revenue at ₹9,37,337-8-6, and the difference between the payments of the two years was—

Year.	Land revenue on roll.	Cesses and rates.	Total demand.
	R a. p.	R a. p.	R a. p.
1892-93	5,89,981 9 9	42,384 15 3	6,32,366 9 0
1894-95	9,37,337 8 6	76,185 1 0	10,13,525 9 6
Difference	3,47,355 14 9	33,803 1 9	3,81,159 0 6

This sudden increase of about four lakhs then plunged the district into distress. The district paid the additional

* Not printed.

Mr. Nand Lal.

revenue from its pocket. In fact the actual increase over and above the Famine Commission's limit was—

	R	a.	p.
New revenue	9,37,337	8	6
Produce revenue according to rates above given	5,31,150	3	0
Increase .	4,06,187	5	6

and the settlement lowered the position of malguzars, including cesses and rates, by nearly 100 per cent. This state was followed by the failures of harvest which lowered the prices in the mufassil 100, and the extreme distress was due to the prices being placed 200 per cent. above the capacity of cultivators' earning.

This increase was made when the increase on area, etc., was about—

Settlement.	Area under crop.	Rabi area.	Kharif area.	Prices.
Present settlement (1893-94)	Acres. 1,099,855	Acres. 712,816	Acres. 495,926	18 (wheat and gram).
Last settlement (1863-64) .	884,740	441,732	436,898	24 (wheat and gram).

Prices in 1893-94.

Food—		
Wheat	16·62	} 19·0
Gram	21·12	
Rice	14·18	
Juar and	20·62	} 22·0
Kodon	23·29	
	19·16	

The increase in prices, when the entire benefit from trade had gone to Government, cannot be taken as a ground for further enhancement, nor I think it is advisable to make the increase in prices the ground of assessment. The sudden increase of nearly 4 lakhs of revenue then is due to some other cause, and the real secret is that fallow lands have this time been included in the area cultivated which at the last settlement, in the area under cultivation, included only the cropped area.

Compare—

	Area in cultivation.		Total.
	Area under crop.	Fallow of three years.	
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Present settlement in 1893-94 .	1,044,434	310,119	1,354,553
Past settlement	884,740	...	884,740
	159,694	310,119	469,813

The increase in the cultivated area is about 20 per cent. The present settlement, or the ways of new classification in Land Revenue Reports, give an increase of 50 per cent. by including fallow lands. The value of 310,119 acres of fallow, if cultivated at the average of the tenant's rate R1-2-9 per acre, will give very nearly 4 lakhs. Without this inclusion of fallow R4 lakhs could never have been obtained, and if settlement rates are low, they are so because they are applied on the total area, which had a plough drawn on it once during any of the 4 or 5 years.

This will be made clear by applying the following rules:—

(1) Divide the total *jama* with the rate per acre under each tenure. This will give the total area assessed.

(2) Subtract from this the total area under crop.

And the balance is equal to the fallow lands assessed. By this method I obtain nearly 331,000 acres of fallow lands which are assessed in the new settlement. And the increased rents and revenue of the present settlement was drawn for fallow lands and culturable waste lands, which plunged the Central Provinces in distress, and this was followed by failure of the crop, which has further increased fallow lands, and rents and revenue cannot be paid.

The past successful settlements have been effecting an increase of only 7½ per cent. while the present attempt was to make a sudden leap of 65 per cent. as shown below:—

Name of Settlement.	Period for which made.	Amount fixed.	Increase.	Per cent.	Remarks.
		R	R		
1st settlement .	1818 .	4,17,375	...	...	Reported to have worked well.
,, quinquennial	1820-24	4,48,169	30,794	7½	
2nd do. .	1825-29	6,41,007	1,92,838	43	Pressed hard upon the people.
3rd do. .	1830-34	6,05,014	35,993	5½	Pressed hard upon the people: proved unsuccessful.
20 years' settlement.	1835-55	4,75,760	1,29,254	21	Was described as the 1st settlement.
30 years' settlement.	1863-93	5,69,443	43,974	9	Including new pargana of Bijeroghogarh that was added after the mutiny.
Present 13 years' settlement.	1894-95	9,37,337	3,67,894	65	

I have taken Jabalpur as an illustration to show what has been done in the recent settlement. But it will be found that that is the case with each and every district malguzar's *sir* which were valued at about half the average rate of tenants are and now valued at nearly twice the average rate of tenants.

	R
Thus the total revenue is	9,37,337
Twice this	18,74,674
	(assessed at 50 per cent. rent of revenue).
60 per cent. will add 10 per cent. more .	93,733
Taking the mean .	19,78,407

	R	a.	p.
The assets then are something like .	19,26,540	0	0
Sub-tenant the amount paid by tenants in 1894-95	13,88,570	15	0
Malik makbuza	53,634	3	0
Free grantees	7,755	3	0
	14,49,960	5	0

And about 5 lakhs of rupees are gone to *sir* land. The area of malguzar's land is:—

	Acres.
Area held as *sir* . . .	152,776
Other than *sir* . . .	77,330
	230,106 or, say, about 230,000.

This gives per acre nearly R2-3-0 against the rates of tenants—

	R	a.	p.
Absolute occupancy	1	2	1
Occupancy	0	14	0
Ordinary	0	15	0

The rates of malik makbuza $\frac{R53,634}{R51,923}$ = more thana rupee when they ought to have been valued at the rate of favoured tenants, that is, at half the tenants rates (*vide* Famine Commissioner's remarks given below.)

Famine Commission Report, 1880, Part II, page 90.

"The land revenue is a source of income which in India must be distinguished from taxation properly so-called, as by immemorial and unquestioned prescriptions the Government is entitled to receive from the occupation of the land whatever portion it requires of the surplus profits left after

defraying the expenses of cultivation. This right was and is very often exercised by the Native Government to the extent of taking from the occupation of the whole of this surplus. But the Government under British Rule instead of sweeping off the whole margin of profit in no case takes more than a fixed share which is estimated at from 3 per cent. to 7 per cent. of the gross outturn or 50 per cent. either of the net produce or of the rent. Land Revenue may, therefore, with more propriety be regarded as a rent paid by a tenant, often a highly favoured tenant to the paramount power." *Mr. Nand Lal.*

But the present policy had been quite different. The rents on the favoured class of tenants, malik makhuza and *sir*, have been enhanced by nearly 100 per cent. and more, on the present occasion, which leaves not only no margin of profits to the cultivators, but sweeps away the total income of ordinary years and something more from their pocket.

Written answers to the Commission's questions by NAND LAL, *late Head Master, High School, Raipur.*

Mr. Nand Lal.

As to the extent and severity of the distress.

*1 (a) Almost the whole of the Central Provinces. " Hardly any part of the provinces escaped altogether, but the suffering was most severe, in the three northern districts, Jabalpur, Saugor and Damoh, which had already gone through a series of bad harvests." (Administration Report, 1895-96, page 1.)

(b) The agricultural and non-agricultural population of the districts was—

Classes.	Saugor.	Damoh.	Jabalpur.
Agricultural	282,702	179,920	414,549
Non-agricultural	309,041	145,693	333,597
TOTAL .	591,747	325,613	748,146

and from my experience as a malguzar of Khurai Tehsil, which has not as yet emerged from the critical position, in which the successive failures have placed it, I can say with some degree of confidence that the whole of the agricultural class and more than half of the non-agricultural class whose income was less than R15 per mensem was affected, the percentage of population affected in each district would come to be about 75 per cent.

Census, 1891.

Class.	Occupation.	Percentage.
A	Government servant	1·94 per cent.
B	Pasture and agriculture	66·52 do. suffered.
C	Personal service	2·44 do. suffered.
D	Industrial occupation	18·71 do. suffered.
E	Commerce, transports and storage . . .	1·22 per cent.
F	Professions	...
G	Indefinite and independent	7·31 per cent. suffered.

2. The distress was due to the impoverished condition of the people, followed by the depression of the agricultural prospects, which placed the prices of food-grain beyond the reach of the ordinary earnings of the people. Several causes acting simultaneously had exhausted the resources of the country, and the agricultural classes who were already deeply involved in debt and had their income and paying capacity further curtailed by the enhancement of recent settlement, the result was that they lost their credit in the money market, and could not get sufficient and timely help when their crops were failing.

3. (*a*) Looking to the character of the season and comparing the rainfall of 1894-95 with the average of previous years, I really do not understand why in Jabalpur there should have been such a miserable crop of wheat as 3 annas in the rupee, when the early monsoon gave $\frac{42{\cdot}16}{42 \text{ days}}$ inches and the late monsoon $\frac{17{\cdot}29}{27 \text{ days}}$ inches.

The average of 25 years was $\frac{43{\cdot}41}{56 \text{ days}}$ and $\frac{12{\cdot}35}{6}$ inches respectively. In Damoh also we find a very good shower both for the late and early monsoon distributed as shown in our Statement No. II with an equally sad result of 3-anna wheat crop. In Saugor we find a 3-anna crop recorded in 1889-90, when the quantity of late monsoon is only 2·03. In 1895-96 again we find such discrepancies as :—

	September.	October.	November.	TOTAL	Wheat crop.
Saugor .	3·84	·16	...	4·00 / 8 days	6 annas
Damoh .	2·95	...	...	2·94 / 7 days	5 ,,
Jabalpur .	1·43	·10	...	1·53 / 3 days	8 ,,

Whereas in 1885-86 we have a 12-anna crop in 3·11 inches of twelve rainy days. My opinion is that it is the light shower well distributed with occasional gaps to allow sufficient sunshine that gives a good crop ; 40 inches of this nature will be quite enough to give a good crop, in black soil, the sandy soil will require more.

But it is not the rainfall alone that helps to give a good crop. Rain is, of course, the principal requirement, but scientific methods of cultivation, the general condition of the cultivator, his ability to provide necessary expenses and seed in time, are also to do much. It is money that brings money. Mere toiling with broken-down bullocks would not give a good crop until the field is not ploughed six inches deep.

3. (*b*) After the famine of 1878-79, the prices had again regained their normal condition, and wheat was once more selling at the normal rate of 26 seers per rupee, thus :—

1881-1882.

	Seers.
Damoh	31
Saugor	23
Jabalpur	21
Mandla	26
Seoni	24
Average . .	26 seers.

Since then they have been continually following :—

Years.	Saugor.	Damoh.	Jabalpur.	Mandla.
1885-86 .	22·08	23·30	17·75	22
1886-87 .	19·66	21·0	16·0	22
1887-88 .	16·57	21·0	16·50	22
1888-89 .	16·07	18·0	15·25	19
1889-90 .	15·76	18·0	16·25	17
1890-91 .	14·0	18·0	14·75	17
1891-92 .	13·0	17·0	13·0	17
1892-93 .	13·0	17·0	13·25	16
1893-94 .	14·0	17·0	13·0	16
1894-95 .	12·0	12·0	13·0	19
1895-96 .	11·6	12·0	12¼	16½

This is what is obtained from Land Revenue Administration Reports, but as far as my knowledge goes, the prices in 1894-95 were much higher in the mufassil than at the head-quarter.

The prices at the recent famine were lower than those of the famine of 1878-79, which were as below :—

	Saugor.	Damoh.	Jabalpur.	Mandla.
1878-79	11	13	10¾	11

* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

Mr. Nand Lal.

4. Average crop outturn recorded side by side with average crop in annas in our Statement No. II will show that kharif crop in 1894-95 in Saugór, Jabalpur and Damoh was nearly as bad as that of 1885-86 and 1888-89, and the rabi of Saugor in 1885-86 and 1886-87 was also as bad as that of Damoh in 1889. Jabalpur figures are also not promising, but there was no famine because the new settlement had not lowered the staying power of the people. The crop estimate of the three districts for the last eleven years has been as below :—

	Average of nine years.	Average of 1894-95.	Average of 1895-96.	
Saugor .	9·97	8·0	8·3	
Damoh .	9·8	7·4	7·6	
Jabalpur .	11·8	8·5	8·0	

The fall below the normal state, all crops taken together, was—

	In 1894-95.	In 1895-96.
In Saugor	19 per cent.	17 per cent.
,, Damoh	25 ,,	16 ,,
,, Jabalpur	28 ,,	32 ,,

But in wheat the fall was excessive. The average crop of wheat in 1894-95 and 1895-96 was—

	Average crop of wheat.	In 1894-95.	In 1895-96.
Saugor .	12½	6	6
Damoh .	11	3	5
Jabalpur .	12	3	8

This, when multiplied with the area under crop, was a tremendous loss, calling for an immediate necessity of relief works. The average outturn per acre, which is often taken on the best selected fields, was as low as shown below :—

	Saugor.	Damoh.	Jabalpur.
	lb	lb	lb
1894-95 .	223	111	103
1895-96 .	193	177	432

Taking then the coarse kind of food people might have escaped severity of famine if no rent were collected during these years, but as will appear from our Statement No. IV, even during these bad years enhanced rates of rent and revenue were collected from the people, and it was only when they could not pay, that suspensions and remissions were granted. The recent famine has, therefore, fully tested the paying capacity of the people, and the years which could have ended in scarcity, put on the most galling appearance of a famine of the severest type. The export trade during the years of scarcity made the matter still worse.

The preceding years were only ordinary years, as in none of the years the crop estimate came up to the 12-anna average. The average of eleven years was a 10-anna, out of a full 16-anna (*vide* our Statement No. III*b*).

5. Certainly not ; when the average crop of the whole Central Provinces and majority of the districts is about 10 annas, the cultivating classes and all those who hang on the business on cultivation, must be taken to be always in a precarious state, as their earnings are hardly sufficient to maintain their families, pay the Government demands and debts at one and the same time. The percentage of such people who are living on scanty subsistence will be found to be about 75.

6. Yes, the irrigated area is only 4 per cent.

7. The people are four times as poor as they were some 15 or 16 years before. All people whose earning is less than R15 may be safely put down to have no reserve fund at all. Food required for a family of five people at 1½ lbs. per day (at 15 seers a rupee) alone costs a sum of $\frac{5 \times 1\frac{1}{2} \times 30}{15} = R7\frac{1}{2}$ per mensem.

I think this is the case with almost all the cultivators, whose holdings do not contain more than 50 acres. Taking R10 as the average income of an ordinary year and deducting R7 for the cost of cultivation and seed and about a rupee for Government rent, the net income in ordinary years is about 22 per acre, which will require 90 acres to maintain a family. But they work at their fields and wages, say about R4 per acre for working, goes to maintain their family ; this saves them R6 per acre and each tenant must cultivate 30 acres. Add 20 acres for the social expenses of the family, clothing, etc.

8. From the history of the Indian famines recorded in the Report of the Famine Commission (year 1880, pages 28-29) it will appear that during a period of 110 years, that elapsed between 1769 and 1879, while Madras suffered ten times, North-Western Provinces seven times, Panjab four or five times, these Provinces suffered but twice, *viz.*, in 1868-69 and 1878-79. I have some faint recollection of the scarcity occasioned by the drought of 1868, which occurred in the north of Saugor and Jabalpur, and also that of 1868-69. On the former occasions when thousands of the famine-stricken people poured into the town of Saugor, from Central India, the rich and poor rushed to their help, as they would go to purify themselves by a visit of Mahatmas' Jamat, and of their own accord subscribed largely in cash and kind. These people were kept outside the town with the fostering care of a nurse. In 1878-79 when I was Deputy Inspector of Schools at Hoshangabad, I saw malguzars helping their tenants. Tenants and labourers who had not the means to subsist, were engaged in filling the hollow places of the fields with earth, digging certain wells and so forth, all engaged on the improvements of fields. This was then the relation. Tenants in those days recognized their malguzars as their *ma bap*, and neither tenant nor the malguzar thought of going to Court against one another. The tenants paid all they could with the honesty never seen in these days when each man is trying to postpone his dues, with the secret intention of getting scot-free under the protection of Limitation Act. The amount in these days is spent in litigation, in those days, it was spent in supporting the tenants ; and malguzar's granary was a store-house of peoples' earnings ; and they like a rightful heir claimed the indulgence showed to them, by flocking to his door. These good relations are altered. Resources of malguzars have been curtailed by enhanced rates of taxes and revenues. The amount received in the shape of high prices by malguzars and tenants in these days, go to make up the Government revenue. The difference of export and import is equal to Government revenue from all sources and expenses of litigation. The malguzars' granary is empty; he has no cash in his hand to support his suffering ryot, and the "staying power" is gone from off his hands. He himself has become a prey to these calamities, and Government had to employ its own men. In former days if any help was needed was made through malguzars, who had more interest in saving the lives of their tenants and dependants, than the Inspectors and Patwaris of these days. The result was as was expected. It took more than a year for the Government to obtain figures and facts to decide on the kind of relief required, and people died by hundreds and thousands before the relief centres were formed. On the former occasion malguzars helped the tenants until such times as Government aid was got : this time he could not ; for, as shown above, the crops were failing when Government demands and enhanced revenue of the new settlement were collected by sharp warrants ; when people were dying by starvation. The calamity, therefore, went on increasing until it was found too difficult to stem the force of increasing distress, and more people died in Saugor District this time than on the former occasion.

9. I think the estimate formed of the prosperity of the people in the recent settlement was not only too high but more imaginary than real. The crop experiments were taken on selected fields and imaginary factors were cast on data wholly unreliable. The nominal rolls of malguzars were taken as the bases to cast unit incidence, when it was well known to the authorities that the rent was never fully realised. The rent-rolls were repeatedly condemned in the Land Revenue Reports as too high ; the arrears were pointed out, yet in one of the resolutions, the rates were retained on the ground that if the crop outturn were not high the malguzars could not have enhanced the rent so high as R6 or R7 per acre. Jamabandis containing such high rates of rents were accepted as the basis of a scientific system. Rent rates obtained by such calculations, placed the settlement estimate at a distance of about 65 per cent. (*vide* statement No. VII) from the old rates and in Jabalpur the revenue with rates was raised from 6 lakhs to 10 lakhs of rupees, in Damoh from a little over 2 lakhs to 4 lakhs and more, on the main ground that the prices of produce chiefly wheat has increased by 100 per cent. and more, when actually the whole profit derived from trade was returned to Government in different ways—stamps, registration, excise, law and justice, etc. The real state of the peoples' condition was, therefore, not known, and the high prices often driving the people to poverty at last plunged them into scarcity and famine, which followed the train of the new settlement. Never on any occasion calamity lasted such a long time, and I hold the people were impoverished, were lingering on the border of the famine of money, when new enhancements drove them to despair and hopelessness. The credit of the cultivating class was lost in money market and he could get no help to

prepare his fields as easily as he used to get before, in times of such difficulty from his sahookars. The result of this was that the area under crop fell down.

34. No. To find out a nature's law, requires a very large number of experiments, especially the estimate of crop outturn must be obtained for at least 10 years from the same field, and I would beg to suggest that village committees with school-masters as their secretaries be organised to obtain correct results.

35. I don't think we can entirely dispense with the services of Patwaris, but an improvement can be made in the new system by including village school-masters in the village committees and requiring village committees with malguzars as their President to supply all such information with correctness. This system will have successful advantage.

1stly.—Each return or report required will be carefully checked by the committee before it is submitted to the authorities for compilation.

2ndly.—Scientific improvements that are most urgently needed to improve the productive capacity of the land, will be gradually introduced both in the school and in the system of cultivation.

3rdly.—If Patwaris are made to assist the master, he will have the advantage of getting the help from his students in copying certain things.

4thly.—He can take them to fields and give them a practical instruction in surveying.

5thly.—The Government will have, when large number of students are thus trained both in the art of cultivation and survey, the advantage of a regular system of preparing the candidates for Patwaris' works.

6thly.—The cost of Revenue Inspectors will be saved by appointing one or two assistants to Deputy Inspectors of Schools.

7thly.—The malguzars and other respectable gentlemen will take lively interest in school matters, when it is made the centre of the well-being of their occupation.

8thly.—There are some village post-masters who are drawing ₹10, ₹12 and ₹15 per mensem and doing very little, I think; they can also be very usefully employed in school work.

The only thing required is the extra amount to create some new schools, and if some permanent scale of rent and revenue is framed to put a stop to all arbitrary enhancement on moderate scale of rent, all improvements can go on side by side by reducing the present rents and receiving a certain percentage out of the remitted portion, for school improvements and improvements of lands, which can be deposited in the name of the cultivators from whom it is collected in the name of 'Famine Insurance Fund' for the benefit of his own field. The amount so collected ought not to be spent anywhere except in his own land through the village committee.

36. Certainly not.

37. If rain fails to give a good shower after the seed is sown, the crop never turns up to be a first class, and by inspection the experienced cultivators can tell what will be the fate of that field, which has not put on a good appearance; and as each tenant and malguzar goes almost every day to watch his fields and knows the real average outturn of such fields, the village committee will be the best organisation to get all such information within the prescribed period.

45. I have made my suggestion. It is this—

(1) Leave sufficient margin to tenants and malguzars. Give them full 12 annas of the average net income from their fields to each cultivator, and 4 annas to go to form the assets. Malguzars having greater responsibilities ought to have their *sir* lands on half the rates of tenants. Cesses, rates, Patwari and Mukaddam charges, ought to be finally fixed at 10 per cent. and deducted before the Government share 50 per cent. is taken, for if a malguzar is ruined, Government Revenue becomes insecure, and care should be taken to restore him to his original situation. This is one of the greatest mistake, in my humble opinion, committed in the present settlement. If he were in position to save, he would have certainly saved money and lessened the anxiety of the Government. Let a system of a permanent settlement be drawn out on this plan. The present settlement sweeps off almost the system of whole profit, and no immediate help can be got near at hand.

(2) Place the additional rates collected for such emergency to the credit of the village, from which it is collected. If this is done, charitable people can be asked to contribute any thing they can on the occasion of marriages and other social ceremonies to the charitable fund of the village, and poor crippled people be maintained therefrom.

(3) Some alterations in the law of limitation is also needed to extend the three years' term of the Limitation Act, so that the tenants and malguzars may not be forced to Civil Courts for fear of loosing the case, and decree so obtained during the famine period should not be immediately executed. The creditors can postpone their civil suits if they are not debarred by time. The interest of the period so extended should not be allowed.

(4) Cases of seed and rent instead of being filed in Civil Courts be entrusted to Central Committees organised for the purpose. This will have the effect of saving many from ruin.

(5) In times of scarcity no food grain from the affected parts be exported. Section 11-C. should be given full effect to, and more works of irrigation and embankments be provided for in future from the amounts to be received as "Insurance Funds" supplemented by such grants as Government may choose to make from time to time.

49. I would keep the men to their own village, give them work in their own fields, make advances for that reason as malguzars did on past occasions. This is for the cultivating class. The non-cultivating class, if I have work and means, I should prefer to engage them in embanking my own fields and digging or excavating old wells. If good grass be go at the time, I think it would be very advantageous to have hay-sacks.

(*a*) If large works of irrigation to be taken I would propose a canal system, where it is possible, provided Government doles not make it a source of additional taxation.

(*b*) The Government share in future be fixed for ever in the average produce per acre obtained from the average outturn supplied by the committee from different centres.

98. Twelve years.

As to loans to cultivators and landlords.

200. In hard times like the recent famine, belly goes before all, and it is in my humble opinion not advisable to give such loans to individual tenants or cultivators, it should be advanced through the village committees, part by part, who may be required to report on the amount of useful work done for the amount advanced.

204. I think advances are better in their case; but the condition should be, they must embank their own fields and receive these advances through the village committees headed by Tehsil Officers, in proportion to the work done each week.

205. I would prefer advances on the condition given in answer to 204.

206 (A). When the condition required is satisfied and he receives the advance for the improvement, he makes in the field the increased income expected from the field, so improved by embankment or work of irrigation, will itself enable him to pay off the sum by small instalments if taken without interest. But the amount advanced must be such that no work is left unfinished.

(B). In order that the state may not be called on to make large advances all at once, Famine Insurance Fund be opened and additional rates be deposited to the credit of the people; when these are exhausted with any addition that Government may make from private charity fund, the cultivators must also be made to work for daily wages that he should receive on the field of his neighbour.

207. The amount remitted, suspended in the three districts mostly affected, is as follows :—

Remitted.

	Saugor. R a. p.	Jabalpur. R a. p.	Damoh. R a. p.
1893-94 . .	338,928 12 3 (doubtful)	...	229,443 0 0 (doubtful).
1894-95 . .	97,250 5 4 remitted	...	207,205 13 2 remitted.
1895-96 . .	21,178 15 4 remitted	310,392 (doubtful)	1,39,073 5 11 remitted.

Mr. Nand Lal.

208. In my village Karondee (Saugor District) I remitted the whole amount that Government had the mercy to remit to me, and I think quite just to bind down the malguzars to remit the amount to their tenants, except perhaps such a portion as malguzar is required to spend for the well-being of them all. Such as a manager's pay who toils for them all.

209. Most certainly. If this kind of help were not given, famine would not have abated so soon.

210. I do not think the suspended amount can be realized, without pressing severely on land-holders. I myself am a looser by such suspensions and remissions, but I am aware that its realization will be a measure to bring back the calamity which was heightened by the increase effected in the recent settlement. The amount suspended is just equal to the increase effected in each district, which shows that the condition of the people is not such as can bear the large increase affected.

211. The income of the fields obtained is compared in the Statistic Nos. V and VI with the requirement of food. The new settlement rates are cast on full 14·4 crop of wheat, whereas the average of 11 years gives 10 crop in an average, and cannot be recovered by instalments which means (14·4 annas the instalments).

212. No. No.

214. I think this rule is most necessary and ought to be applied to malguzars, lands and shares also, as the malguzar will not be able to realize nor can he pay his share of rent.

215. I have dealt on this subject in the beginning (*vide* General Remarks). I thank the Government most heartily for the measure taken to allow the people to freely express their views.

216. It has saved thousands of lives who would otherwise have been starved to death in Jabalpur, but it has come to my notice that in Kharai Tehsil, at least in Karondee, this most salutary relief measure was not adopted. I think the jungle produce ought to be fully allowed even in ordinary years, as the crop outturn 10-anna is not sufficient to maintain the total population after deducting seed and export figures which are shown in my general statement.

217. I think so, even in ordinary years fruits and roots have saved millions of creatures: it is the poor class who eke out their existence out of it, and I think it should continue to help the people.

218. Not to my knowledge.

219. Small berries, achar, mohua, kanda (catable roots) leaves of herbs, vegetable, etc.

230. I think so, but through the village committee.

232. They are the pillars of our prosperity and chief supporters of human life, and no effort ought to be spared to relieve them. The Indian system of lending seed for sowing and food will show how this class, on whose labour the world subsists, are helped and re-helped, until the lender of seed and money himself is received by failure of crop.

233. I do not see any reason why it should not.

234. I am a member of the Landlord's Association, Jabalpur, and we have passed a resolution to send our hearty thanks to our brethren in England who have helped us in this distress and saved thousands of poor miserable people from the dire calamity.

235. This charity fund was very liberally given. Blankets dhotis, coats, vessels, food, and gratuitous relief to respectable people, who would never have gone out to beg, and advances to cultivators for bullocks and seeds, kichens (*sic*) and cloths, all were largely, liberally and at the same time most economically and judicially distributed by officers who had the charge of distribution.

239. Very right, famine is not a time to make distinction between one fund and another intended to save life and between man and men; whosoever could be helped and from whatsoever source, ought to be helped.

240. I do not think. They had nothing to live upon and could never have saved, when prices were rising so high as 7 or 8 seers a rupee.

264. Very nearly—population increased by 23·39 per cent. and area by 27·7 per cent. I think the food growing capacity of the soil is rather deteriorated for want of manure and irrigation, and cannot supply the full quantity required for consumption, export, and seed, until improvements are effected.

265. The same as I do to my own existence. As I am sent so they are sent, and those who understand the real object of the creation in creating the universe, know that they are travelling from the southern to the northern pole, and their existence is as important as ours, and if they have not means to live upon, we must as, in duty bound, part with a portion of ours, like angels, rather than consider them as burden on the society. Nobody knows where lies a gem and what wonder it will do, and how useful it will prove when it comes to existence and play its noble part.

266. No; on the contrary they fell down when prices rose high.

267. I think so. They are always on the verge of famine.

268. With irrigation there will result the prosperity of the country and there shall be less fear of such calamity if Government demands are not increased side by side.

(*b*) That is the law of nature, and cannot be avowed. Nature alone sets itself right; our duty is to help and improve the condition of human comfort.

269. I do not think any forced measure to emigrate the people is necessary. Each loves his dear home, and likes to die in the midst of his friends and relations. If they are willing to migrate of their own accord, by all means let them go and with protection and shelter, but in Central Provinces the density per square mile is yet very low. The highest figure in Nagpur at the last census was 197, the next to it Narsingpur 191, against 419 in North-Western Provinces, 522 in Oudh, etc. The people of these parts have always been migrating to other parts of their own accord, and we have no objection to it.

282. I know from the state of my granaries that they were empty.

283 (1). Failure of the crop; (2) competition with England's trade.

293. Poverty. Sixteen seers a rupee is the general ability of a poor man's purchase, gives 32 seers per two rupees, the meanest get per mensem.

296. Agricultural and labourers.

297. Yes. As high prices left very little margin for saving which in ordinary years is devoted to some useful works.

298. No. As there were more men to work and less to engage.

309. The best evidence that can be advanced is that the agricultural classes have to pay the increased demands of Government, and meet the demands of increased number in the families from almost the same average of 10-anna crop.

311. Both. The results must inevitably follow if no step is taken to limit the export of food grain.

Export produce.—Quantity required for consumption and seed.

And as population has been increasing rather a little more rapidly than *pari passu* with the area under crop, and no method of irrigation and manure are largely provided, the produce in ordinary years will remain at about the same average. The increased export must, therefore, necessarily decrease the quantity of consumption, and as belly goes before, the seed will be eaten, which will result in the diminution of the area under crop and a general agricultural distress.

Written answers to the Commission's questions by NATHOO RAM SINGHAI, *of Etawah, Khurai, Saugor District, dated 26th March 1898.*

Mr. Nathoo Ram Singhai.

With reference to the public notice issued by the Commission and memo. No. 314, dated Nagpur, the 9th March 1898, in which attention is drawn to paras. 3 and 4 of the said public notice, I beg to state that I am a resident of Etawa, Khurai Tahsil, District Saugor, and a Jani Baniya by caste. I am a malguzar of 15 villages now aged 58 years. I have recollections of the famines which occurred formerly, and I myself had started some bunding work in my own villages in 1896, and had the opportunities of visiting other relief works when I went to Khurai and Saugor. I therefore beg to submit my written evidence in Hindi with its translation in English, for the kind perusal of the Commission. I beg to say that I would be quite willing to give oral evidence if I be allowed to appear before the Commission which is to sit at Jhansi. I could not appear before the Commission at Jabalpur as I fell sick on the 13th of March, and was

lying in bed for more than a week. Now as I have fortunately recovered, I submit my humble views enclosed herewith, together with a medical certificate.

*1. The whole of the Saugor District and its entire population was affected.

2. The cause of the severity of distress seems to be the failure of the timely and sufficient rains and of the harvests for four consecutive years, and therefore prices also rose abnormally high.

3. The crops were poor on account of heavy rains in the latter part of the agricultural season, resulting in rust, hailstones, etc. The prices were abnormally high, and ultimately were higher than those of past famines.

4. Up to the time of the failure of the rains, the produce obtained in the two or three years preceding the famine was not full but rather short.

8. The late famine was more severe than the past famines.

9. The degree of distress for four consecutive years, the extent of crop failure, the extent of loss sustained by the people was under-estimated (until the distress ripened into the worst famine). If the estimate were made correctly, every measure of relief should have been adopted. The enhancement of rent, the assessment on fallow land (of column 11 of the *jamabundies*), calculating of extra sources (miscellaneous income) to a fanciful extent, enhancement of rent on the individual holdings, and thereby showing an enormous increase in the gross income (*nekari*), for fixing the Government revenue demand (*jama*), should not have been done. The recovery of the Government revenue should not have been made so strictly as to compel the cultivating class to part with cattle and other property to satisfy the demand.

35. The patwari should be maintained, but should not be changed without any important reason. Because a patwari who remains long in a locality, possesses better knowledge than a new one.

201. The relief given to broken-down agriculturists has proved a great success. A great portion of the area (which would have remained unsown) could be sown, or else many of the agriculturists would have turned either labourers or beggars.

Nathoo Ram Singhai.

215. The indebtedness among the proprietors, cultivators and landlords of the Khurai Tahsil has increased to a very great extent, and there is very little prospect of their getting out of it.

The borrowing has been on mortgage of property. I shall prove this fact by my own personal instance.

Before the late famine I possessed 15,000 maunds of grain, and jewellery worth ₹15,000. The whole capital consisting of grain and money had sunk in the first two years of famine, partly in grain advances and party in the payment of Government revenue. I disposed of one mouza for ₹5,600, and obtained a loan of ₹60,000 on mortgage of my whole property consisting of villages and houses, and all this amount sunk in the third and fourth years of famine. I must not omit to say, at the same time, that I am only one man without a family or children, and at the same time there is no other expenditure which may be said to be extravagant, besides my own personal subsistence.

Though I am a proprietor of 15 villages with *sir* land of 1,500 bighas, yet I find hard to get out of debt. At the same time I find it difficult to carry on my own agricultural industry as well as of any tenants, because I cannot obtain a further loan, as my property is already mortgaged.

When such is the lot of an only man like myself, what can be said of those of my equals, who have to support their family and children besides their own subsistence, and have to meet other expenses. And persons who were inferior to me as regards their status, must have become mere paupers so to say, in the late famine. Before the time of famine I had a school built at the cost of ₹6,000, and a letter was given to me by the Deputy Commissioner of Saugor in recognition of this charitable act. I spent about ₹15,000 in bunding of fields in my villages (with a view to find labour for engaging my village people). I have with me a letter given to me by the Deputy Commissioner of Saugor in which that officer expresses his regret by mentioning the contrast between my former position and the position to which I am reduced during the last famine.

Written statement of evidence by MOTIRAM TULARAM, *Local Board Member, Bori, dated 4th March 1898.*

Mr. Motiram Tularam.

Q. 1. Whether the arrangements with regard to famine were carried out under the rules in the Code or not. If carried out, to what extent?

A. 1. Tenants were given takavi without interest for improving their lands, and rupees for purchasing bullocks, etc., were distributed amongst the helpless tenants, and thereby many poor souls were relieved of the distress which famine brought over them. If these arrangements were carried out a little before the time which necessitated the tenants to purchase bullocks, etc., under proper care, the aims of the Famine Code would have been perfect.

A. 2. Poor people were given license to have the fruits and roots in the jungle to live on. They were a little benefitted from the malguzari jungles rather than from Government ones.

A. 3. No relief works and no grain-shops for the helpless people were opened in this Board. These defects were required to be remedied.

Q. 2. Whether means to help the helpless people and to save their lives were properly carried out or not. If carried out, to what extent; and whether expense on this matter was economized or not. If economized, to what extent?

A. 1. To the helpless people money were given. If a better management were adopted in giving the money, they would have been much benefitted.

A. 2. Kitchen-houses were opened at several towns. Helpless people had their meals once a day, instead of twice, which were essential to them under the law of nature, and the changes were necessary in the food. These arrangements were in existence too late and were not when the famine appeared. It would have been better on the part of the poor and helpless people if the cloths might have been distributed to them a little earlier and if the arrangements for their shades to live under, for medical aid, and for the servants particularly to look to the kitchen-houses were made, it would have been too better to them.

Q. 3. What arrangements should be made in future as to the facts noted above.

A. 1. Arrangements should be done as to the takavi for grain-seeds, etc., through the important townsmen before the time of cultivation comes, and the manner of observations should be kept in such a manner, by which they should be benefitted from the production of takavi.

A. 2. Inspections should be under the Revenue Inspectors of the improvements of lands done by tenants and certificates should be given to them. Thereby the improvements will be encouraged and the poor people will get support.

A. 3. Grain shops should be at important towns (Kasbas) for having the poor people the grains at moderate rates and the inspection should be properly made at the places where the grain is sold.

A. 4. Passes should be given to the poor people to bring the fruits and roots from the malguzari and Government jungles, and the inspection of them should be thoroughly made.

A. 5. It would be better if the sarai be in the heart of the towns which is necessary for the passers-by.

A. 6. In such a town the hospitals are necessary, and if the finance does not permit to have them, other medical means should be used, because the helpless passengers fall sick and die, there being no medical aid.

A. 7. Under the section 34 of the Famine Code the care of the helpless and sick persons with regard to food and medicine should be entrusted to the Police. If this management be kept continually in existence, the passengers will thin little of the distress of the famine.

Q. 4. What useful suggestions should be made to check the distresses of the famine if it comes?

A. 1. If four suggestions out of them given under the Question 3 be adopted in the beginning of famine and the rest be kept always in existence, the subjects of the Gracious Queen, Empress, which are thankful for ever, will be so to her.

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* The numbers refer to the questions drawn up by the Commission.

Written statement of evidence sent in by a voluntary witness not examined by the Commission.

BERAR.

Revd. A. Sanchon.

Written statement of evidence by the REVD. FATHER A. SANCHON, *Roman Catholic Priest, Ellichpur, dated the 26th February 1898.*

By letter dated Amraoti, the 12th February 1898, the Commissioner of Berars intimates that:

"The Indian Famine Commission which is to commence its sittings at Nagpur on the 7th March 1898 desire that the heads of the principal Missions in Berar should be informed that it is ready to receive voluntary evidence if submitted in written form, and that it is particularly anxious to consider carefully any suggestions which Missionaries of experience may be prepared to make."

On this intimation the undersigned has the honour to suggest:

1.—UNION OF THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WITH THE HEADS OF MISSIONS AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF DISTRESS OR FAMINE.

For instance, at Ellichpur, the Municipality under the head of "Famine Relief Committee" were empowered to aid as far as possible the destitute who applied to them. The undersigned was not a member, but the Civil Surgeon and the Superintendent of Police being members were permitted to examine each individual case that applied for relief and to sign a pass that was handed over to the Secretary of the Municipality by the recipient who was given one day's supply of *atta*. Now, what hindered the same individual from presenting himself to some charitably inclined resident for further help? The undersigned regrets to say that he received no information about the existence of the above Relief Committee, either from the Municipality or from the Local Government officials.

2.—SALE OF GRAINS TO INDIGENTS ONLY.

The first object Government has in view is relief. Therefore there should be depôts for the sale of good grains in each destitute district, and the officer in charge should be instructed to sell at a fair price to those only who are unable to purchase in the local market. Charitable institutions ought to be allowed to get grains from those depôts for their famine-stricken orphans.

It would be better yet if Government were laying in a stock of grains at the beginning of the famine. The officer in charge should be instructed not to sell to Government servants who have not only their pay but also a compassionate allowance for dearness of provisions. Natives who have a few rupees to spare should be prevented from purchasing grain from those depôts at a cheap rate, which grain they might sell with profit in places where rates are much higher.

3.—ANOTHER OBJECT GOVERNMENT HAS IN VIEW IS THE SAVING OF LIFE.

When a famine breaks out there is an influx of starving people towards cities and cantonments which may carry in its wake epidemics. An instance of it occurred in the cantonment of Ellichpur last year in the month of April, when the Civil Surgeon detected several cases of cholera among children of the famine. People were seen roaming from morning to night. If a camp had been formed near by, to a great extent such an unsatisfactory state of things would have been prevented. Therefore the undersigned would suggest that camps be formed in sufficient numbers, and that they be supervised by a medical officer. The object Government has in view would thus be carried out; relief would be given, suffering ameliorated and in many cases life would be saved.

4.—OPPORTUNITIES AFFORDED OF FORMING AN OPINION ON FAMINE OR FAMINE RELIEF QUESTIONS.

The undersigned came to India as a Roman Catholic Priest in the year 1866. During the great famine of 1866-67-68 he took part in the relief works carried out by Government in Orissa. At the very commencement of the famine the authorities enlisted the *bon voulair* of all Missionaries in Orissa. Orphans were handed over to them impartially. There was perfect unity of action between the Roman Catholic Mission, the other Missions and Government during the whole time of the famine.

At Ellichpur the Roman Catholic Mission has been compelled to act independently. It has housed and fed many. The Sisters of the Cross have admitted a large number of patients in their pharmacy. An orphanage for kourkan children, and a refuge house for widows, under the same Sisters, have been established at Chikalda. In some cases the Mission may have spent needlessly money in relieving the poor through sheer ignorance of the provisions made by Government in the same direction. But this will not happen in future famines, when Missionaries of all denominations are duly informed of the provisions made and of the rules framed by the local Government for the relief of the famine-stricken population.

In conclusion, the undersigned has the honour to acknowledge with thanks the timely donation of R500 "for the keep of orphans at Chikalda by the Sisters of the Cross" (letter from the Charitable Famine Relief Committee, dated Amraoti, the 5th February 1898).

QUESTIONS DRAWN UP BY THE COMMISSION FOR THE GUIDANCE OF WITNESSES.

AS TO THE EXTENT AND SEVERITY OF THE DISTRESS.

1. In your province / district what was the area affected and its population?

2. To what was the distress due? To local failure of the rains and of the harvests, or to abnormally high prices, or both?

3. (*a*) Describe the extent to which the rains and the harvests dependent on them failed, as compared with the normal state of things.

(*b*) Were prices of food-grains much higher than in other years? Were they as high as, or higher than, those experienced in past famines?

4. Up to the time of the failure of the rains, what had been the condition of the affected area? Had preceding seasons been favourable or the reverse?

5. Under normal circumstances may the population of the affected area be considered to enjoy a fair measure of material well-being? Is there any section of the population in it which from special causes is ordinarily in an unsatisfactory and precarious condition? Is it relatively large?

6. Is the agriculture of the affected area specially dependent on timely and sufficient rain, owing to any peculiarities of soil, crops, absence of facilities for irrigation, or the like?

7. To what extent has the population of the affected area reserves of money or food for its support in the event of failure of one or more consecutive harvests? What sections of the population have not such reserves, and what proportion of the total population of the affected area is so situated?

8. How does the late distress compare in respect of its extent and severity with that experienced in any other famine of recent years in the same locality?

9. Is there any reason to suppose that the extent of crop failure, or the degree of distress, or the absence of resources on the part of the people, was under-estimated or over-estimated on the present occasion at any point of time? If this was the case, did it affect the character or amount of relief provided?

AS TO THE SUFFICIENCY AND ECONOMY OF THE RELIEF MEASURES.

10. The Famine Commission of 1879 appear to have held the opinion that the number of persons on relief in the worst months of a famine ought not to exceed 15 per cent. of the population of the affected tract (paragraph 75). Does this standard coincide with your experience? Is it liable to be exceeded in particular tracts, while being a fairly correct standard of relief as applied to the whole of the affected area in a province, some portions of which would be less distressed than others?

11. How do the relief figures of your province / district in the late famine compare with the standard of the Famine Commission? If there are cases in which the standard was largely departed from, can you account for them?

12. Having regard to what you consider to be a fair standard of relief under given conditions, do you think that in any part of your province / district the proportion of the total population relieved was larger than was necessary to prevent loss of life or severe suffering? Were persons relieved who were not really in need of relief? And, if so, to what do you attribute this?

13. On the other hand, were there any cases in which a larger proportion of the population might have been relieved consistently with the object of saving life and preventing great suffering? If so, what was the reason? Was it due to the attitude of the people themselves, or to defective or insufficient or ill-adapted relief arrangements?

14. If the relief arrangements were defective, insufficient or ill-adapted in any cases, was the cause of this circumstance avoidable or not?

15. Judged by the mortality of the famine period, has the relief given been successful in its object? If the mortality has been in excess of the normal, is there reason to think that this might have been prevented by more extensive or more timely relief measures?

16. Were any changes made at any point of time in the scheme of relief which was followed by a large decrease or increase in the numbers on relief? Do you consider that such increase or decrease was a direct or indirect result of such changes, and that they had the effect of excluding from relief persons really in need, or of bringing on to relief persons who did not really require relief?

17. Can any connection between such changes of system and the death-rate be traced?

18. The Famine Commission (paragraph 111) considered that the best safeguard against profusion on the one hand and insufficient assistance on the other was to be found in prescribing self-acting tests by which necessity may be proved. Do you consider that this principle has been observed to the fullest practicable extent in the late famine so far as your experience goes?

19. The chief test was held by the Commission (paragraph 111) to be the exaction of labour from all those from whom labour can reasonably be required, the labour being in each case commensurate with the labourer's powers, and the wage not being more than sufficient for the purpose of maintenance. In the late famine, wereall persons who could do a reasonable amount of work required to work as a condition of receiving relief?

20. The phrase "who can do a reasonable amount of work" was intended by the Famine Commission (paragraphs 133 and 146) to include women and children, so far as they are healthy and capable of labour. Have these classes of persons been subjected to the labour test in your province?

21. The Famine Commission (paragraph 111) considered that, if this principle be observed, the numbers of destitute persons to whom the test of labour could not be applied would be "comparatively small". What has been your experience in the late famine as to the numbers of persons relieved, otherwise than through the operation of a labour test, in comparison with (1) the total population of the affected tract; (2) the numbers relieved on works. Have they been comparatively small? If not, what is the explanation?

22. With regard to the labour-test, have the conditions of the task and the wage been such as to constitute a stringent test of necessity? Has the task been a full one, considered with reference to the working capacity of each person? Has the wage been more than a bare subsistence wage, regard being had to the fact that it was open to the several members of a family to obtain separate relief.

23. The Famine Commission (paragraphs 128 and 146), while objecting to a "distance test," as a condition precedent to a person being received on a relief work, considered that one large work in each sub-division would prove sufficient and that most of the workers would find it necessary to reside on the work. Have the relief works been more numerous than this, and have the workers as a rule resided on them or not? Is residence upon a relief work disliked by the people, and does it constitute an effective and a fair test of necessity?

24. Can you give statistics showing the highest percentages on the total population of persons relieved on works

("dependants" being excluded) attained in the period or periods of maximum pressure?

25. How do these percentages compare with those attained in previous famines? If they are considerably higher, what is the explanation?

26. It has been alleged that in the present famine the people have resorted to relief works with greater eagerness and at an earlier stage of distress than in previous famines. Is this your experience, and if so, do you consider this due to the greater liberality of the terms of relief as compared with those in force in former famines, or can you assign any other reason?

27. Was "gratuitous relief" mainly given through the medium of poor-houses in which residence is a condition of relief, or in the form of cooked food in kitchens where residence was not a condition of relief, or by means of doles of grain or of money to persons in their homes?

28. The Famine Commission (paragraph 140) recognised that the "village system," or the grant of relief in the homes of the people, involved "the risk of a too free grant of relief". Do you consider that the risk was effectually prevented, and that gratuitous home relief was strictly confined to persons who were in real want and who belonged to the classes specified in your Code?

29. Has gratuitous home relief been given more largely and at an earlier date in this than in any former scarcity? If so, give the reason and say whether the change has been beneficial. Has it saved lives and kept villages and households together? On the other hand, has it in any way demoralised the people, by making them more ready to accept charity, or by weakening the moral obligation of mutual assistance?

30. State the gross cost of direct famine relief in your $\frac{\text{province}}{\text{district}}$. State the number of persons relieved (in terms of units of one day's relief), and the cost of relief per unit. Compare the cost with the cost of relief in previous famines. Having regard to the comparative severity of the late distress, has relief been economically administered on the present occasion?

31. What indirect relief, in the form of loans or suspensions and remissions of land revenue, has been given? Can you say how the amount of such relief compares with similar relief given in former famines?

32. What is the net result of the famine, alleviated as it has been by relief measures, on the economic condition of the population of the $\frac{\text{province}}{\text{district}}$, distinguishing between the land-owning class, the cultivating non-proprietary class the agricultural labourers, and the trading and artizan classes? Have these classes respectively been permanently injured, or will they speedily recover their former position?

33. Is there any important matter in which the scheme of relief-measures prescribed by the Code is seriously defective, or fails to meet the requirements of a particular class or particular classes of the community.

As to the arrangements existing for ascertaining the imminence of scarcity.

34. Do you consider that the arrangements existing in your province for ascertaining and reporting failure of rainfall and crops are sufficient? Can you suggest any improvement on them?

35. If no revenue village organisation, such as patwaris, is maintained by the State in your province, how is information as to the cropped area and the condition of the crops ascertained?

36. Can the crop-returns be relied on as regards (1) the area and kinds of crops actually sown: (2) the extent to which sowings have failed: (3) the condition of the crops?

37. Are the returns obtained within a sufficiently early date after the crops have been sown to be a guide, when distress is apprehended, to the extent of the apprehended distress?

38. In the late famine were the relief arrangements of each district largely based on the agricultural information given by these returns?

As to the extent to which the prescriptions of the Provincial Famine Code have been departed from or have been found to be unsuitable.

39. Please describe each different measure of State relief used during the late famine or scarcity in your (province, district or charge, according to the grade or status of the witness). What measures of private relief were also in operation?

40. What opportunities did you have of gaining a practical knowledge or experience of the working of these measures?

41. Which, if any, of these measures were not Code measures, *i.e.*, not authorised by the Local Famine Code as it stood before the famine began?

42. Were any of the Code measures not used in the late famine, or abandoned after trial?

43. In working Code measures of relief, what material departures were made in practice from the detailed provisions provided for such measures in the local Code? Please to answer this separately for each measure, and explain the reasons for the departures, and give your opinion as to their sufficiency.

44. State the comparative advantages and disadvantages of each measure you have seen used (A) primarily with regard to relief of distress and saving of human life, (B) secondarily, with regard to economy.

45. Can you suggest any improvement of the measures you have seen used, or any other measures which you think ought to have been used; or which ought to be tried in the case of future famines or scarcities?

46. State the particular combination of measures which you would recommend, with regard to both the considerations mentioned in the penultimate question for the tract liable to famine which you know best.

47. If you know any other tract or tracts liable to famine for which some other combination would be better, please describe those tracts, and the combinations you have in mind.

48. Which measures were most approved by the general opinion (A) of the different classes in distress; (B) of the intelligent natives not themselves in need of relief?

49. Have you any other criticisms to express on the measures of relief used in the recent famine; or any other recommendations or opinions to advance which you think may prove useful in the case of future famines?

As to relief works.

I.—Extent to which works of public utility may be available as relief works.

* 50. State the number of relief works charges under the Public Works Department and Civil officers, respectively, at the time when attendance on relief works was a maximum, under each of the following classes:—

(*a*) Roads.
(*b*) Village tanks.
(*c*) Impounding reservoirs.
(*d*) Canals.
(*e*) Railways or tramroads.
(*f*) Miscellaneous works.

* 51. What was the total length in miles of new roads constructed as famine relief works—

(i) unmetalled,
(ii) metalled.

52. What do you estimate as the average number of day units of labour that can be employed per mile of each class of road, the work in the case of (ii) including the collection and consolidation of metalling, and collection of a reserve supply for five years?

53. Do you think that all the roads constructed as relief works will be of permanent service to the community, and that they will be effectively maintained in future, or that they will probably be abandoned as soon as they fall into disrepair?

54. If the roads now constructed are all regularly maintained, do you consider that there will still be room for new

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NOTE.—Questions marked with an asterisk (*) may be answered by one officer specially deputed for the purpose, or, if the Local Government prefers, the information may be given in the final famine report of the Province.

roads, should it be necessary a few years hence to open relief works ; and if so, what length of new roads could be proposed in the districts principally affected in the late famine ?

55. What is your opinion of the value of metal collection as a means of employment of relief labour ?

56. Has metal been collected for existing or projected roads in the late famine in excess of probable requirements for the next five or ten years ?

57. What is your opinion of the value of village tanks as a form of relief work—

(i) as a means of employment of relief labour ;

(ii) as a means of permanently benefiting the villages in which they are constructed ?

* 58. What is the total number of village tanks that have been excavated or deepened or enlarged as relief works under Public Works and Civil agency, and the approximate number of day units employed ?

59. What was the average number of workers for whom employment could daily be provided in a satisfactory way on an ordinary village tank ? Can you make any suggestion for securing strict supervision over small and necessarily scattered tank works, or for preventing the whole population of the village from applying for work on the tank because it is at their doors ?

60. Has the number of possible village tanks been exhausted by the recent famine works, or can we rely upon again being able to employ large numbers on such works on the recurrence of famine, say within 20 years ?

61. In what districts have impounding reservoirs been constructed ?

62. Can such works in these districts be regarded as in any way a protection against famine, or as increasing the powers of resistance against famine of the community for whose benefit they are constructed ?

63. Is there a prospect that many impounding reservoirs could be advantageously constructed in these districts as relief works in future famines, if projects were deliberately investigated beforehand, and on the assumption that the cost of their construction must in any case be expended in some form or another, for the purpose of relieving distress ?

* 64. What irrigation works, other than impounding reservoirs, have been constructed as relief works during the late famine, and what has been the approximate expenditure incurred on them as relief works ?

* 65. What expenditure will be required on them, on sub-heads of construction (such as land, masonry works, etc.), that are of little use for purposes of relief works, before the works can be completed and made available for irrigation ?

* 66. What is the area that these works may be expected to irrigate usually in ordinary years, and will the area that may be anticipated in years of drought be greater or less than may be expected in ordinary years ?

If any such works were constructed in former famines, have the anticipations of their utility been fulfilled ?

67. Do you know of any irrigation projects that can be usefully investigated with the object of providing employment for relief labour in future famines, and with the prospect that the cost of maintenance will be covered by an increase in the revenue that may be attributable, either directly or indirectly, to the works proposed ?

* 68. Under what arrangements with the Railway administration interested have feeder railways or tramways been undertaken as relief works ?

* 69. Generally, do you think it would be possible, after careful investigation by competent officers, to prepare a programme of large and useful public works that might be put in hand in future famines in preference to petty works, such as have been carried out during the recent famine, the conditions being—

(*a*) That much of the expenditure on such portions of the work as can be carried out by relief labour will have to be incurred in any case for the purpose of affording adequate relief to the distressed population, and that, if not incurred on the works proposed, will be incurred on others of a less useful character.

(*b*) That the cost of future maintenance of the work will either be covered by the gross revenue that may be expected from it, or, if the work will not produce revenue, will not be out of proportion to the public benefits anticipated from its construction, or beyond the means of the authority that will be responsible for such maintenance.

(*c*) That the completion of the work will not involve an expenditure on materials or other items out of all proportion to the expenditure to be incurred on items that can be carried out by relief works, except when the work, as a whole, is likely to prove remunerative, or when its execution sooner or later has been decided on, in the interests of the public, and without reference to the necessity for providing employment for relief labourers.

70. What are the provisions of the Provincial Famine Code regarding the maintenance of a programme in each district of famine relief works, with sanctioned plans and estimates ? Has the Code been in practice observed, and were plans and estimates for the works entered in the district programmes ready prepared when distress appeared ? If plans and estimates were not ready, what was the reason ?

II.—As to large and small works, and the distance test.

71. What, in your opinion, is the greatest distance at which the distressed inhabitants of a village may be induced to attend relief works—

(*a*) when they return every night to their villages ;

(*b*) when accommodation is provided on the relief works ?

72. Do you think it would be practicable to withhold relief from all fairly able-bodied labourers who refused to attend relief works at the distances stated in reply to the last question ?

73. Would you recommend conveying relief labourers long distances of over 100 miles by rail or steamer to any large public works on which there is a strong demand for labour, or in which their labour could be very usefully employed, in preference to employing them near to their own homes on petty works of little use to any one, and the construction of which would never be contemplated, except for the purpose of affording employment for distressed labourers ?

74. In the late famine has residence on the works been the rule or the exception ?

75. Has residence been made a definite condition of relief, or has it incidentally resulted from the small number of relief works open and the distance of them from the homes of the majority of the workers ?

76. Are you in favour of making residence obligatory, or of indirectly inducing it by concentrating the works ? Have you any evidence that when such a test is not enforced, the relief works attract many persons not actually requiring relief ? Do you consider that a high task and low rate of wage are in themselves sufficient tests ?

77. Is residence on the works so distasteful to the people that they will undergo extreme privation before they submit to it ? Can you point to any instances in which this feeling has prevented relief offered under condition of residence from being effectual ? Or any in which it has passed away or become less intense after a short trial ?

77A. Within your own observation is the objection to go long distances for work or to reside on relief works so strong in particular localities or with particular tribes or castes as to prevent relief offered under such conditions from being effective ?

78. If famine were widespread in the province, would the disposable establishments be large enough to supervise works so numerous and so arranged as to allow the majority of the workers to return daily to their homes ?

79. To enable relief workers to come to a relief work daily from homes several miles distant and yet to earn the full famine wage, have reductions for "distance" been made in the task of such persons ? Refer the Commission to the rules (if any) on the subject, and explain how they were

NOTE.—Questions marked with an asterisk (*) may be answered by one officer specially deputed for the purpose, or, if the Local Government prefers, the information may be given in the final famine report of the Province.

worked. Were such "reductions" allowed when hutting accommodation was provided on the works? What precautions were possible to prevent distance being overstated, especially in the case of those who did not return to their homes every night, but found shelter in adjacent villages?

80. What was the cost of hutting accommodation per worker?

81. Did the cold and discomfort attendant on residence on the works affect the health of the people?

82. Was it necessary to provide blankets and bedding for the people in consequence of residence being enforced?

83. Is the proportion of "dependants" relieved on the relief works less when works are small and numerous than when they are large and few? How do you account for this?

*III.—Task-work and piece-work.**

84. What was the proportion of labourers employed on task-work and piece-work, respectively, on the relief works under your charge, during the late famine?

85. Are you of opinion that piece-work is suitable for the employment of relief labourers in all cases?

86. If not in all cases, do you think that it is suitable in any? If so, specify the conditions under which you would generally recommend its introduction.

87. Do you consider the objections taken by the Famine Commission (paragraph 133) to piece-work as the predominant form of relief on works are overstated, or can be removed or lessened by administrative expedients? Or that they are on the whole less important than those which in your experience may be urged against task-work?

88. What arrangements would you recommend on works carried out under the piece-work system for labourers who might be too weak or incompetent to earn a subsistence wage at the rates offered, but are nevertheless not sufficiently helpless to be proper recipients of gratuitous relief, either on the works or in their own villages?

89. Would you propose any arrangements limiting the amounts to be earned on piece-work by expert and able-bodied labourers who might be able to execute far higher tasks than those assumed as the basis for the piece-work rates? If so, state what arrangements you would propose.

90. What is the size of the party to which you would make single payments for the work done, *e.g.*, in the case of earthwork how many diggers, with their own complement of carriers, would you put into one gang, or what would be the average number of diggers and carriers together forming a gang, and to whom a single payment should be made?

91. Are you of opinion that if payment for work done is made to the head of such a gang, as is referred to in the previous question, the amount paid will fairly be distributed by him among the members of the gang? Have complaints of unequal or unfair distribution been common when this system has been adopted?

92. Can you give any idea of the reduction that may be made, both in numbers and cost of special establishment, by the substitution of piece-work for task-work?

93. Do you think there would generally be any difficulty in inducing the people to attend works on the piece-work system if works on the task-work system have not been previously opened?

94. What is in your opinion the most convenient system of classifying relief labourers when employed on task-work?

95. What wage would you propose for each class in terms of the grain staple in general consumption by the classes from which labourers are drawn, expressed in *chattaks*?

96. Is it necessary to maintain the alternative system given in the Famine Codes under which wages may be calculated according to the cost of the component parts of a day's ration?

96A. Would you propose a different task and wage for men and women within the same class?

97. How would you classify, task and remunerate children—

(i) above 12 years of age,

(ii) below ditto.

98. What do you consider the minimum age at which children should be employed as workers?

99. What penalties would you propose for labourers who fail to perform the task set them, and how would you enforce them?

100. Are the present restrictions as to fining below the minimum wage necessary or expedient?

101. Have considerable bodies of relief workers been on the minimum or D wage for a continuous period? Has it resulted in enfeebled health?

102. Are you in favour of allowing all labourers to earn something in addition to the normal wage proposed in your reply to question 12 in the performance of a task in excess of the normal?

103. Are you in favour of paying a wage on Sundays, or one rest day in seven, and if allowed, what condition as to previous attendance would you propose as entitling to a rest day wage?

104. Do you consider it possible to introduce a standard task for all carriers as suggested in paragraphs 9 and 10 and in Appendix I of Mr. Higham's Report on the Management of Relief Works?

105. Do you think that the formula proposed in Appendix I of Mr. Higham's Report for determining a *reduced level*, in which allowance is made for the initial effort in each trip, for the vertical lift, and for the actual horizontal level is one that may be generally accepted for the purpose of a measure of the work done by carriers. If not, what modification of the formula would you propose?

106. Assuming that the reduced level is calculated as proposed in Mr. Higham's formula, or in any modified form of it that you may prefer, what is the *duty* that you would assign to an ordinary famine carrier, the *duty* being the number of cubic feet carried in a day multiplied by the reduced level in lineal feet, the value suggested by Mr. Higham being 10,000?

107. Do you think it possible to instruct the works establishment ordinarily available on relief works to arrange for the disposition of labour so as to secure, at all times, the best proportion of carriers to diggers, that may be possible under the circumstances; diggers being made to carry when the proportion of carriers is too low, and carriers being as far as possible employed in digging, even with reduced tasks, when carriers are in excess?

108. What is in your opinion the best unit for task work, that is, the size of the party to whom a given task is allotted and all the members of which should be liable to fine if the task is not performed?

109. (For Bengal only.) Do you know anything of what is called the Blackwood system, and do you consider it preferable to ordinary task-work or to piece-work? If so, state your reasons?

110. (North-Western Provinces only.) Have you had any experience in what has been called the modified intermediate system, and if so, do you consider it preferable to task-work under the system laid down in North-Western Provinces Circular No. 18, dated 5th December 1896, or to piece-work in which payment is made to the head of a working party simply with reference to the quantity of work done, and without any reference whatever to the constitution of the party?

111. (North-Western Provinces only.) If you consider this system preferable to the others, would you advocate its adoption on all relief works, whatever the degree of the distress? If you consider it inapplicable in districts in which the distress is very acute, please state your reasons?

112. In what proportion have the adult male workers stood to the women and children? Has it varied greatly in different districts and in the same districts at different periods? Has the proportion differed in the same district and at the same point of time on task-work and piece-work?

113. Can you account for the great preponderance of women and children on the relief works when these exceeded two-thirds of the whole number? Did the adult males find private employment at wages in excess of the famine wage? If so, was it really necessary for the State to support their wives and children?

113A. When failure of crops has caused great rise of prices and expectation of famine in a district, but its circum-

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* It is desirable that the witnesses should have read the recommendations contained in Mr. Higham's Final Note. Questions 84 to 93 are intended only for witnesses who have had experience of piece-work.

stances are such as not to justify the opening of relief works or even of test works, is it good policy to at once arrange for special employment of labour by the Public Works Department on ordinary terms? Would such action enable large numbers of labourers to retain longer their independence and their full working power, and in that way would it stave off the time when large numbers become so pinched that private charity and mutual help cease, and famine relief becomes a necessity?

113B. After a famine has been ended by good crops and a fall of prices, is it sometimes advisable to make provision for special employment of labour by the Public Works Department on ordinary terms in order to assist the very poor who have been left without resources, till a continuance of better times has completely restored them to their normal condition?

113C. Under existing rules of account would expenditure incurred in the cases and under the conditions described in the two preceding questions be met from the budget provision for ordinary public works, or would it be charged to Famine Relief?

113D. Have you any suggestions to make with a view to giving more precision to the summary of "Principles for regulating expenditure upon public works in time of famine", circulated to Local Governments by the Government of India's Famine Circular No. 16—104-1 F., dated 13th February 1897, or have you any criticisms to offer?

IV.—Relations of Civil and Public Works Officers in connection with the management of relief works.

114. Can you define the classes of relief works which may in your opinion be most conveniently carried out by Civil and Public Works officers respectively?

115. What powers of control, if any, do you think should be exercised by the Collector and Commissioner, respectively, in regard to the management of relief works which have been entrusted to the Public Works Department?

116. In the case of such works what are the matters for which, in your opinion, the Collector and the Executive Engineer, respectively, should be held responsible?

117. Do you think it desirable that any powers of control reserved to the Collector in the case of works carried out under the agency of the Public Works Department should be delegated to or exercised by his Assistants?

118. What class or classes of men do you think most suitable as officers in charge of a relief work camp, it being assumed that the services of all available Public Works officers and subordinates are required for setting out and supervising the work, conducting and checking the measurements, etc., and on the general duties of inspection and control?

119. Do you consider that the officers in charge should, in the case of works carried out by the agency of the Public Works Department, be placed under the direct orders of the officers of that Department?

120. Do you think that the officers of the Public Works Department who are responsible for the execution and inspection of relief works, can or should also undertake the control of all other matters within the relief camp, such as the payment of labour, the conservancy arrangements, the management of kitchens, bazar arrangements, etc.?

121. Do you think it necessary or desirable that either the officers in charge of relief camps, or the inspecting or controlling officers should be vested with magisterial powers for the maintenance of order in the camp, and if so, to what extent?

122. Was there any essential difference between the systems of management adopted on works under Public Works and those under Civil agency?

123. Do you consider that any of the works carried out by the Civil officers might, with advantage, have been transferred to the Public Works Department, or, *vice versâ*, that any works were carried out by the Public Works Department that should have been left in the hands of the Civil authorities?

V.—Other details of management.

* 124. At what intervals do you consider that the payments of wages should be made—

(i) to labourers on task-work,

(ii) to those on piece-work?

* 125. In the case of task-work, would you adopt the *pice* unit for payments, or pay to the nearest pie, as worked out by the ready reckoner?

* 126. Do you recommend that payments should be made by independent cashiers or by the gang mukarrirs?

127. Has it been the practice in any works to require *chalan* from civil or village officers before admitting newcomers to the works, and if so, do you consider it a desirable practice? What was done in such cases with labourers presenting themselves without a *chalan*?

128. What is your experience in regard to members of aboriginal hill tribes?

(i) Has there been much difficulty in inducing them to attend the works?

(ii) When on the works, have they worked steadily, carried out their tasks and been amenable to discipline?

129. What are the maximum and minimum number of labourers that should form a single charge?

130. Are you in favour of kitchens in all cases in which relief is given to non-working children? If not, under what circumstances would you recommend cash doles?

* 131. What do you consider, as a result of your experience, may be considered a fair ratio to the value of the work done if performed by ordinary labour at the ordinary rates of—

(i) the payments actually made to the labourers employed, including the Sunday or rest day wage;

(ii) the total cost of the work, including relief to dependants and all incidental charges?

And support your opinion by statements showing the general results of all the operations under your charge?

* 132. Have you any suggestions to make on the question of famine accounts and returns?

VI-A.—Interference with the supply of labour to private employers.

133. Have you received any complaints from the agents of railway or other public companies, contractors, planters, or other private employers, that the opening of relief works affected the supply of labour which they were desirous of employing? If so, give particulars of the complaints.

(For Government officers only.)

134. Did you think there was any foundation for any of these complaints, and if so, was it possible to do anything to meet them?

135. Were the wages or the rates per unit of work done paid by such employers in excess of the normal wages and rates in ordinary seasons, or did they follow in any way the rise in the price of grain?

136. Do you think the rates paid by the employers were insufficient to enable an ordinary able-bodied family accustomed to labouring on works to earn a bare subsistence at the market rates for grain that obtained?

137. What arrangements, if any, would you propose in future famines to prevent relief works attracting labour that would otherwise go to private employers?

138. Can you say if relief operations were assisted in any way by the employment offered by private employers of all classes to able-bodied workers in their immediate neighbourhood other than professional earth-workers? Are you aware whether any works were undertaken by them with this purpose which, but for the existence of distress, would have been postponed to more later date, or whether any special efforts were made or facilities afforded with the object of assisting in the relief of distress?

139. Do you think it would be possible in future famines to utilize the agency of private employers in any way for the purpose of providing more extensive employment for the distressed?

VI-B.—Interference with the supply of labour to private employers.

140. Do you consider that the supply of labour to the works under your control was injuriously affected by the opening of relief works in the neighbourhood or at a distance?

(For employers of labour only.)

NOTE.—Questions marked(*) may be answered by one officer specially deputed for the purpose, or, if the Local Government prefers, the information may be given in the final famine report of the Province, or in reply to the Government of India's Resolution (Revenue) No. 31, dated 25th October 1897, recorded on Mr. Higham's Report.

141. Did you find it necessary to revise your rates after relief works had been opened? If so, give particulars of the rates before and after the opening of relief works, and compare them with those that you have paid in ordinary seasons for the same class of work.

142. How far from your own works were the relief works which you consider interfered with the supply of labour?

143. Have you made any complaints on the subject to any of the officers connected with relief works, and if so, with what result?

144. Do you consider that the establishment of the relief works complained of was necessary as a means of preserving life, or that without them the people who attended them could have found sufficient employment in your own works and elsewhere to earn at least a bare subsistence for themselves and their dependants?

145. If you consider that Government relief of some kind was necessary, do you think it would have sufficed to give it in some other form than relief works, or to have opened relief works on a different principle from that actually followed? If so, state your views on these points.

146. Do you think that it would have been possible to employ local labour in distressed districts upon works under your control, and to have obviated the necessity for Government relief works in the neighbourhood, if Government could have made arrangements for the sale of grain to all labourers on your works at privileged rates considerably below the market rate?

See paragraph 12 of Mr. Higham's notes on Central Provinces.

147. Have you any other remarks on the subject of relief works that you would like to lay before the Commission?

AS TO GRATUITOUS RELIEF.

148. What percentage of the population of the affected area was placed on gratuitous relief at the period of maximum pressure?

149. Did the persons so relieved mainly belong to the agricultural classes resident in rural areas?

150. Do you consider that all the persons thus relieved were incapable of work on a relief work, and were without relatives bound, and able to support them, and had no resources of any kind?

151. In ordinary years how are such persons supported, and why should famine or scarcity throw them upon the State for support?

152. Were the persons who received gratuitous relief in their homes chiefly women and children? To what extent did the women belong to the *pardanashin* class?

153. Can any reliable estimate be formed for a given tract of the number of persons requiring gratuitous relief in their homes during an acute famine? Will the numbers vary with the severity and stage of the distress?

154. If the numbers of relief workers attending the relief works open in a district are small, may it be presumed that no great amount of gratuitous relief is required?

155. In some provinces it appears to have been the practice to require the incapable poor who had able-bodied relatives to accompany the latter to the relief works and there to remain as "dependants". Do you approve of this practice as a test of necessity?

156. Would you give gratuitous relief to an incapable person having an able-bodied relative bound to support him, who declines to go on to the relief work?

157. May it be presumed that gratuitous relief at home is very popular with the people, and that it is sought for by many who are not absolutely destitute or who are capable of labour on the relief works?

158. Was the circle and inspection organization at your disposal sufficiently strong, vigilant, and well-informed to restrict gratuitous relief to those who were incapable of work and would otherwise have starved? Describe the precautions taken.

159. Do you think that the successful administration of this form of relief requires a larger staff of supervising officers in the superior grades than any other kind of relief?

160. Does the acceptance of such relief place any social or caste stigma upon the recipient?

161. Does the knowledge that gratuitous relief is given by the State lead to the drying up of private and village charity quicker than would otherwise be the case, and tend to make the people cast their customary obligations for the support of the poor of the locality upon the State?

162. Could some of the persons to whom gratuitous relief was given have been employed on light manual labour on relief works in or near their village?

163. Could such work have been provided by assisting the land-owners of the village to undertake the construction of tanks or roads or other village works?

164. Central kitchens, where cooked food is provided for all comers without any condition as to residence, have by some officers been preferred to gratuitous relief in the homes of the people, at least in the early stages of distress, or when distress is on the wane. What is your opinion on this point?

165. What are the social and caste feelings of the people as to receiving cooked food in State kitchens? Would the substitution of kitchens for gratuitous relief in the form of grain or money doles, practically exclude, on account of these sentiments, certain classes from relief who really need it?

166. Apart from the sentimental difficulty, would it be practicable to maintain a sufficient number of kitchens so as to be within the reach of all persons requiring gratuitous relief?

167. Was gratuitous relief given in the form of grain or of money? Which form do you prefer?

168. Was it given in the actual homes of the people, or were they required to repair periodically to a central place to receive it?

169. Within your observations was there much malversation or extortion on the part of patwaris or other subordinates employed in the distribution of gratuitous relief? Were there any instances in which persons paid money, or surrendered part of the dole, in order to be placed on the gratuitous list?

170. To what extent was the existing revenue or police organization by villages or larger groups utilized in ascertaining the persons requiring home relief and afterwards in distributing such relief, and how far had it to be superseded or supplemented?

171. To what extent was gratuitous relief administered through voluntary unofficial agency?

AS TO POOR-HOUSES.

172. Was the population of the poor-houses in your $\frac{\text{province}}{\text{district}}$ large at any point of time, or continuously so throughout the famine period?

173. From what classes of the community were the inmates chiefly drawn?

174. Did persons of the better castes or of respectable position object to resort to the poor-houses for relief? Would any degree of pressure have induced them to go there?

175. Compared with any experience you may have had in former famines, do you think the people generally showed decreased reluctance in the late famine to accept poor-house relief? If so, to what do you attribute this?

176. Was the mortality of the poor-house population exceptionally high throughout the period, or in any particular months? Can you account for this?

177. To what extent were the inmates of the poor-houses persons who had wandered from other districts within the province, or from other provinces, or from Native States?

178. From the physical condition of the persons entering the poor-houses and the distances they had come, what opinion did you form as to the severity of the famine, and the degree to which it had broken up households and caused wandering?

179. Were any measures taken to keep down the population of the poor-houses by drafting to works or to their homes all who could properly be thus disposed of? Was this systematically or spasmodically done?

180. Is the poor-house ration prescribed by the Famine Code sufficient? Had the dietary to be varied in the case of weak and sickly persons?

181. Are the rules and appendices of the Famine Code as to the management of poor-houses sufficiently explicit and detailed, and in all respects suitable? Can you point out any defects in them and suggest improvements?

182. Are legal powers required to enable relief officers or district authorities to send persons found begging and wanderers without any means of support and persons who, being able, refuse to work at the relief works, to poor-houses, and to detain them there? Was compulsion in this direction in practice used?

183. Were endeavours made to get work out of poor-house inmates, and with what degree of success?

184. Had any compulsion to be used to detain persons in the poor-houses? Were the inmates free to leave when they chose? Were the departures or escapes numerous?

As to relief centres.

185. Was it found necessary to open relief centres where doles of grain or money were distributed, as an alternative to giving similar relief in the homes of the people? Under what circumstances was this necessary?

186. When relief centres were thus established, was work exacted as a condition of relief from able-bodied persons? What kind of work was exacted?

187. Did the attendance at relief centres tend to become unmanageably large? Was the collection of large numbers of persons at such centres found to be productive of epidemic disease?

188. Does the expedient of relief centres as a substitute for village relief and an organized system of relief works in the early stages of distress commend itself to you?

189. In your experience would it have been better to have completed the village relief arrangements and to have opened regular relief works at an earlier date than was actually the case, in localities where relief centres were resorted to?

190. Are there any special tracts of country or any particular conditions of the population which make relief centres preferable to village inspection and village relief and to regular relief works?

191. Approximately what area was a relief centre expected to serve?

192. Was voluntary unofficial agency available and utilised to any large extent in the working of relief centres?

As to relief kitchens.

193. What is your view of the functions of relief kitchens at which cooked food is supplied to destitute persons without the condition of residence?

194. Are they required chiefly in connection with relief works for the non-working children and other dependants of relief workers, or may they advantageously be established elsewhere for the relief generally of the incapable poor?

195. At the beginning or end of a famine to what extent is it expedient to substitute kitchens for gratuitous relief in the houses of the people?

196. Was cooked food given at the relief kitchens to all applicants, or only to those furnished with a kitchen ticket by an officer or village headman?

197. When such kitchens became numerous, was strict supervision over the persons in charge difficult to maintain? Was there waste or misapplication of food? What arrangements to prevent this were made? Were the kitchens ordinarily placed under the direct charge of officials, or of zamindars and other private persons?

198. Is it preferable to relieve the non-working children and other "dependants" of relief workers by means of cooked food, or by money doles to the parents? In your experience could parents to whom money was given for this object be trusted to expend it on their children?

As to loans to cultivators and land-holders.

199. To what extent have State advances been made to land-owners and cultivators for land improvements, for seed-grain and cattle, and for subsistence, in the late famine?

200. In the case of money advanced for land improvements, have the recipients, as a rule, spent it on the object for which it was lent, namely, on the employment of labour? Or have they otherwise utilised it?

201. Have the sums advanced for cattle and seed been of much benefit to the cultivating classes? Could more money have thus been advantageously spent?

202. What periods for recovery have been fixed for the different classes of advances?

203. Have advances been given to land-owners and cultivators for purchase of food, and under what restrictions as to the amount advanced and as to the time of the year in which the advance was made?

204. Do you approve of the principle of such subsistence advances, or do you think that cultivators requiring money for food should be required to submit to the self-acting test of accepting work on a relief work?

205. Is it more economical to aid by such advances cultivators who possess some property in land and cattle than to offer them work and wages?

206. Would not every cultivator want to borrow instead of going to the relief works, and would not this mean a very large outlay by the State on loans, and an increase of indebtedness among the cultivators?

As to suspensions and remissions of land-revenue.

207. To what extent has land-revenue been suspended or remitted in the parts of your $\frac{\text{province}}{\text{district}}$ affected by the late famine?

208. Have measures been taken to secure that the relief thus given reached the cultivating tenant? Does the law provide for this? If not, is legal provision desirable?

209. Has this form of relief been of much advantage to the land-owning and cultivating classes? To what extent has it kept them from the relief works, or tended to prevent them from falling into debt?

210. Do you think that the land-revenue which has been suspended and not remitted will be recovered without pressing severely on the land-holders, should seasons be good?

211. Will such recovery be spread over several seasons by means of instalments? Will the corresponding rent suspended be distributed in similar instalments?

212. Does suspended rent carry interest? If so, ought it to do so?

213. Has the Government power to direct suspension of rent on estates held free of land-revenue, when it directs suspensions of rent and revenue on revenue-paying estates? Is such power necessary?

214. In regard to suspension and remission of land-revenue in temporarily-settled tracts, do you think it might with advantage be made a general rule of practice that in regard to estates held by self-cultivating as distinct from rent-receiving owners, when the crop is reported to be, say, below a 4-anna one, and only sufficient to feed and clothe the owners and their dependants and cattle, the proper treatment is immediate remission, not suspension?

215. Can you form any idea to what extent the private indebtedness of the land-owning and cultivating classes has been increased through the famine? Do the stamp or registration receipts indicate increased borrowing and more transfers of land? Has the borrowing in many cases been on a scale which must involve ultimate ruin to the borrower?

As to the use made of forests.

216. What measures were taken to open State and private forests to the people for grazing, or for collection of grass or leaves, or of edible fruits, roots and grass seeds; and what was the effect of such measures?

217. Do you think that the forests might have been more fully made available for these purposes than was the case?

218. Were any departmental operations undertaken for collection and despatch of compressed grass to the distressed tracts, and with what result?

219. What kind of food do the people get out of the forests?

As to orphans.

220. How should orphans who have been maintained by the State during famine be disposed of at the end of a famine?

221. In the case of orphans who, during the famine, have been temporarily made over by the relief officers to private orphanages and payment made by the State for their support, should the Government continue its aid to the private orphanages after the famine?

As to private charitable relief as auxiliary to State relief.

222. Have you any suggestions to offer regarding the statement of the objects to which private subscriptions for relief of distress caused by famine may legitimately be applied as set forth in the *Gazette of India* of 9th January 1897.

223. Do you think any of these objects trench upon the field of Government relief operations?

224. In view of the fact that during the currency of a famine the Government makes itself responsible as far as may be practicable for the saving of life by all available means in its power, do you consider the statement of the second object satisfactory; if not, how should it be modified?

225. Do you think the second object could properly be restricted (*a*) to the giving of clothing and other extra comforts to the orphans, and (*b*) to meeting the cost of their education in some useful craft befitting their station in life and of their maintenance after the end of the famine?

226. Are any special rules or measures necessary to prevent overlapping of charitable and Government relief under Object III; if so, what would you suggest?

227. Do you consider the opening of grain shops, where wholesome food-grains would be sold at rates below the prevailing market rates, a legitimate method of giving relief to respectable persons with small fixed incomes who, though suffering great privations from abnormal rise in prices, would not accept purely gratuitous relief either from Government or from the Charity Fund?

228. Is the opening of these cheap grain shops likely to interfere with private trade, provided the benefit of them be extended only to a selected number of persons? Were such shops started in your district, and did they interfere with private trade?

229. Are you aware that the opening of these shops from the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund operated to steady the market and to prevent fitful raising of rates?

230. To render the help effective, do you think that the relief to broken-down agriculturists should not be confined to the period when acute distress is subsiding, but that it should be given just before the commencement of the agricultural season, even though distress might then be at its height?

231. What class of agriculturists should generally be helped under Object IV?

232. Do you think the Charity Fund could be properly applied in relieving agriculturists who are in a position to get statutory loans (*takavi*) from the Government?

233. Do you think it could be usefully spent in supplementing *takavi* advances where they are not enough to meet all the agricultural requirements of the recipient, including the subsistence of himself and his family, during the interval between the sowing and the harvest?

234. Do you consider the operations of the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund as supplementary to Government relief have served a useful purpose; if so, in what way?

235. Can you describe briefly the nature and the extent of the relief granted from the Charity Fund in your province?

236. Can you give the number of persons relieved under each object in your province?

237. What form of relief under Object I was the most popular and evoked the greatest gratitude?

238. What form of relief under Object III did the greatest amount of good at the smallest cost to the fund?

239. Do you think it was right to spend the bulk of the fund in helping broken-down agriculturists?

240. Do you think the expenditure of such a large portion of the fund under this head has, besides doing substantial good to the persons helped, resulted in great economic advantage to the country generally?

241. Can you state what is the approximate area sown with aid from the Charity Fund in your province?

As to Emigrants and Wanderers.

242. What arrangements were made for the relief of starving wanderers? Were the numbers of such wanderers so large as to attract attention? If so, to what causes was their presence due?

243. Would there have been so much wandering had more works been opened or village relief or relief centres more largely extended? Is it possible by any relief methods to prevent jungle people, or people with whom it is a custom to migrate at certain seasons of the year, from wandering?

244. Was the death-rate of the $\frac{\text{province}}{\text{district}}$ sensibly affected by deaths among wanderers in poor-houses or on relief works?

245. Were the wanderers persons ordinarily residing within your $\frac{\text{province}}{\text{district}}$, or were they from others $\frac{\text{provinces}}{\text{districts}}$ or from Native States? If from other $\frac{\text{provinces}}{\text{districts}}$ or from Native States, why were they attracted to your $\frac{\text{province}}{\text{district}}$?

246. Was any difference made in the treatment of wanderers from your own $\frac{\text{province}}{\text{district}}$ and those coming from other $\frac{\text{provinces}}{\text{districts}}$ or from Native States?

247. How do you think wanderers or emigrants from other $\frac{\text{provinces}}{\text{districts}}$ or from Native States should be dealt with?

As to the mortality during the famine period.

248. What was the ratio of deaths per thousand of population in the famine area of your $\frac{\text{province}}{\text{district}}$ for the five-year period 1891-95 preceding the famine? What was this ratio during 1896 and 1897?

249. How far has the higher ratio in the latter two years been due directly to scarcity of food or to the indirect effects of such scarcity?

250. If, in spite of the privations consequent on scarcity of food, there has been little or no increase in the ratio of mortality, do you attribute this result entirely to the success with which the distress has been met by relief measures?

251. In dry years, unaccompanied by scarcity, the health of the people, it is believed, is ordinarily very good and the mortality abnormally low? The year 1896 was an exceptionally dry year, and as a consequence the mortality would presumably, under ordinary circumstances, have been below the average; would it not seem reasonable to attribute to causes connected with scarcity not only all mortality in excess of the normal death-rate, but also the difference between the abnormally low death-rate of a year of light scanty rainfall and the normal death-rate of years of ordinary rainfall? Would not the compensating influence on the public health resulting from exceptional dryness of season tend to mask the full effects of scarcity of food?

252. On the other hand, an abnormally dry season often results in a short supply of potable water as well as to a concentration of impurities in such supply; do you attribute any part of the excessive mortality during the period of famine to this cause of unhealthiness? Do you think that cholera may have been originated or intensified by this cause?

253. Prevalence of bowel-complaints, dysentery and diarrhœa in communities leads to a suspicion that the food-supply is insufficient, or unwholesome or badly cooked. Did these diseases cause a high mortality in the famine area of your $\frac{\text{province}}{\text{district}}$, and could their prevalence be ascribed to an insufficient or unwholesome dietary?

254. Do you consider the diet supplied to the different classes of relief-workers, to the poor-house inmates and to those fed at the kitchens, to have been sufficient to maintain the recipients in health? Would you, as a result of your own observations, suggest any alteration in the scale of diet laid down in the Famine Code?

255. Can you state the number of deaths which were directly due to starvation in your $\frac{\text{province}}{\text{district}}$ during the famine? Also the number of those who died indirectly from privation? Was the mortality greater amongst women than amongst men, and amongst children and the aged than amongst adults? Did parents frequently, under stress of want, neglect or abandon their children?

256. Of the deaths due to starvation, how many can you enumerate which could have been prevented by the timely

intervention of the State? Explain, if you can, how in these cases the relief measures adopted by the State failed in saving life?

257. Were, in your opinion, the measures of State relief defective either in principle or in their working? Do you think the mortality amongst the people in receipt of State aid was to any extent due to insanitary conditions prevailing in the relief camps, poor-houses, and food kitchens, and can you make any proposals with the object of securing improved sanitary conditions in future famines? Was every practicable precaution taken to provide and protect against contamination pure water-supplies for relief-camps and poor-houses?

258. Was the staff of Medical Officers and Hospital Subordinates sufficient during the famine, and were they provided with an adequate supply of medicines and medical comforts for the use of the sick?

AS TO THE PRESSURE OF POPULATION.

259. Has the population of your $\frac{\text{province}}{\text{district}}$ increased since the taking of the census of 1871? If so, will you state what this increase has been from 1871 up to the end of 1896, this latter being probably the latest year for which the complete figures are available?

260. Is there any evidence of a continuous increase in the birth-rate or decrease in the death-rate?

261. What has the average increase of population been per cent. per annum for each year included in the period mentioned?

262. Do you attribute this increase solely to the natural and unrestrained fecundity of the people, or are there other, and if so what, additional causes?

263. What effect on the growth of population in India would you assign to the enduring peace maintained within our borders, to the suppression of infanticide and widow-burning, to sanitary works and improvements, to the extension of vaccination, and to the strenuous endeavour to prevent the loss of a single life in periodically recurring famines?

264. Has the area under food-grains in your $\frac{\text{province}}{\text{district}}$ increased *pari passu* with the increase of population? Or has the food-producing capacity of the $\frac{\text{province}}{\text{district}}$ been increased by irrigation and improved methods of cultivation at a rate sufficient to meet the wants of the increasing population?

265. What importance do you assign to this growth of population in bringing about in ordinary years an increase in the price of food, and so rendering existence more difficult and precarious?

266. Have the wages of the labouring classes increased as rapidly as the prices of their food-stuffs?

267. Are increase of population and higher prices, unaccompanied by a corresponding rise in the wages of the working classes, indications of diminished stocks of food in the country? Would scarcity be likely to intensify more rapidly into actual famine under conditions of dearer food and a greater number of people earning low wages?

268. The immediate effects of irrigation works and improved methods of cultivation being assumed to increase the production of food for man and beast, what, in your opinion, would their more remote effects be? Would they, in a population of great fecundity and exercising no restraint on such fecundity, tend to cause the people again to multiply up to the limit beyond which the soil could not further support them?

269. How would you propose to obviate this tendency of the growth of population to press close upon the amount of food available for its support?

270. In England we know that at the same problem has been solved by emigration to lands in need of population. Could the same solution be applied to India?

271. In England, unrestrained fecundity is confined mainly to the lower and more ignorant classes. The educated classes, with certain exceptions, exercise control and foresight with regard to the number of children they bring into the world. Is education, within a measurable period of time, likely to pervade the millions of India to such an extent as to lead them to practise similar control and prevision?

272. Irrigation, we assume, increases the productiveness of the soil; it is also acknowledged to be concerned in the generation of malaria in many extensive tracts of the country. Malaria, we have proof, lessens the fecundity of the people. Do these facts suggest to you the involuntary establishment of an equilibrium between the population and the food production of irrigated tracts? Would such equilibrium, brought about in the way which these facts suggest, be a result to be desired?

AS TO THE ORDINARY FOOD OF THE PEOPLE.

273. In the tracts liable to famine in your $\frac{\text{province}}{\text{district}}$, which are the food-grains ordinarily used in their homes by well-to-do labourers and artizans? Please answer separately, if necessary, for town and country and for winter and summer.

274. How many meals do they eat in the day, and of what eatables and drinkables does each meal ordinarily consist?

275. If any of the ordinary food-grains happen to be unprocurable, what other grains do they sometimes substitute.

276. Of these occasional substitutes, which do the people consider most and which least palatable and digestible?

277. What do they say in objection to other grains which might probably be substituted, but which they practically never use?

278. What food-grains were used in poor-houses and kitchens, and at relief works under your observation during the recent famine?

279. How many meals a day did the people get in poor-houses and kitchens, and of what eatables and drinkables did each meal consist?

280. What sort of complaints were made as to the kind of food or plan of meals?

281. How does the diet given at famine relief poor-houses and kitchens compare with the authorized scale of prison diet?

AS TO FOOD-STOCK AND PRICES.

282. Was the great rise in prices of the common food-grains, which occurred in September to November 1896, and was more or less maintained for the next twelve months, in your opinion a reasonable rise? That is to say, was it fairly proportionate to the failure of harvests, lowness of local stocks, and cost of replenishing them? If you think the rise was more than reasonable, to what do you attribute it?

282A. In market towns which came under your observation, was it possible to identify the persons who fixed the bazaar or current rates of food-grains declared from time to time? How far were these current rates strictly followed by the local retail traders?

283. Do you think that the depreciation of the rupee in relation to gold which has been going on has any effect in the direction of making prices of food-grains jump up quicker and higher than formerly when crop failures occur? Has there been a permanent rise in the average price of food-grains in India within the last twenty years? Has the rise been greater in respect of some kinds of grain than of others?

283A. What was the difference in prices prevailing in the distressed area under your observation, and in prices in neighbouring districts where the crops had not failed to such an extent as to make relief necessary? Did the difference appear natural and reasonable in degree?

284. What material fluctuations of prices of grain occurred in the 12 months after 1st November 1896 in the distressed area under your observation? To what did they seem due, and was the trade sensitive? That is, did grain flow in quickly and freely in response to each rise of price from accessible markets where prices were lower? If not, state what in your opinion were the reasons or obstacles which impeded the activity of trade?

285. In the distressed districts under your observation, could the towns-people and villagers, who had money but no private stocks of their own, at all times buy their customary food-grains and condiments at the rates quoted in the nearest grain marts, or had they sometimes to pay much higher?

286. Were the people in receipt of relief in the shape of cash at works or in the village, always able to buy grain at the rates supposed to be current?

287. Were food-grains of the common kinds exported from distressed tracts under your observation while the high prices prevailed? If so, was this due to still higher prices elsewhere, or to want of capital for large purchases in distressed tracts or some other reason?

288. Were fortunes made in the grain trade during the high prices? If so, by what classes and by what sort of trade or speculation? Was it genuine buying to put on the market, or of the nature of time bargain or speculation for a rise?

289. Were the grain pits or godowns of the grain dealers for the most part opened and largely depleted at the close of the distress, or were many unopened and most but little depleted?

290. In distressed tracts under your observation had any of the cultivators and land-owners what may be considered surplus private stocks of food-grain? If so, did they generally sell such surplus or hold up all they had from panic or other reasons?

291. While the high prices prevailed, did those cultivators, who had grain to sell to dealers, get prices as proportionately higher than usual as those the grain-dealers were selling at?

292. Were the wholesale dealings between grain-dealers at prices as near to retail prices as they usually are?

293. To what extent has the habit of storing food-grains in pits or other receptacles diminished among the grain dealers, landholders and cultivators of the tracts producing large crops of the common grains? What are the reasons for such diminution?

294. In such tracts have the railways and roads extended into them had the effect of stimulating the export of the annual surplus production to sea-ports and to rich districts where more valuable crops are produced? When crops fail and prices go up in such tracts, is private trade ready to import freely into them?

295. To what extent were proprietors of land, State raiyats and under-tenants among the classes which asked for and got relief?

296. To what classes did the mass of persons relieved belong?

297. To what was the inability of the distressed people to buy grain at the high prices principally due? Did non-agricultural employment of labour fall off as much as agricultural employment?

298. Did wages of any class of labourers, artizans, or servants go up in any degree in consequence of the rise of prices? If not, why not?

299. Has competition of foreign goods or of goods produced by Indian Mills seriously reduced the purchasing power of any class of artizans or labourers in the tracts under your observation?

300. Can you compare recent with former famines, and say whether the different classes of people seemed this time to have more or less power of resisting destitution?

301. Do you observe any change in their attitude of reluctance to go to poor-houses or to relief-works?

302. Did they sell jewelry, brass pots, and cattle, as much as formerly? Did fall in value of silver jewelry make them reluctant to sell it?

303. What action, if any, was taken by officers of Government in the affected area under your observation to encourage importation of food-grains, or otherwise stimulate the activity of private trade? What was the result for good or bad of such action?

303A. What action was taken, if any, in any locality under your observation to supplement or stimulate activity of local grain-dealers in importing food-grain? What was the result?

304. Suppose that instead of relying entirely upon the action of private trade and the Indian market, the Government had resolved to import grain from abroad to a notified amount and for a strictly limited purpose, that is, for use at a large number of its poor-houses, kitchens, and relief works: suppose also that Government so imported either directly or through contractors, and adopted all possible precautions against obstructing the movements of private trade: what effect in your opinion would such action have had (1) on the cost of relief to the State; (2) on the prices of food-grains in the bazars or open markets; (3) on the activity of private trade?

305. In the districts under your observation had you ever good reason to believe in the existence of local rings of grain-dealers formed to keep up prices of food-grains above the rates naturally resulting from the law of supply and demand? If so, how far did such rings succeed in their purpose, and for how long?

If you think such rings can be successfully formed at the present day in India, can you suggest any legitimate method of breaking them, which would in your opinion have the desired effect, and be on the whole distinctly advantageous?

REGARDING THE GRAIN TRADE.*

306. How far and in what ways was the export by sea of the various food-grains affected by the famine and scarcity?

307. How far and in what ways was the export by sea of other commodities affected?

308. How far and in what ways was the import by sea—(1) of food-grains, (2) of other commodities affected?

309. Is there any evidence that a permanent rise in the price of food-grains in India has taken place of late years?

310. If such a rise has occurred, do you think that it is in any way connected with the fall in the Indian exchange?

311. Is the export of food-grains from India in a series of years on such a scale as to materially affect the ability of the country to feed the population, or to materially reduce the reserve stocks held at a particular point of time in the country?

312. In ordinary years is the import of food-grains by sea, for consumption in the port-town and for distribution into the interior, large?

313. Is this trade in the hands of European or native firms?

314. What grains are chiefly imported and from what foreign ports?

315. When prices of food-grains rose rapidly at the end of 1896, were the stocks of rice and other food-grains large in the port?

316. So far as the information went, were food stocks large in the interior of the country, or in any particular province? What was the general impression as to the extent to which these stocks would prove sufficient for the food-requirements of the country without importation from abroad, and would be placed on the market, or held up?

317. Did the high prices reached at the end of 1896 lead to much speculative dealings in grain?

318. Were these high prices maintained? Were they followed by an active import of grain from foreign ports?

319. Did the price of rice in Burma and of wheat and maize in Europe and America rise in consequence of apprehension of diminished food exports from, or of an anticipated demand on account of, India?

320. Were shipments of grain made from American or European ports to India? If they were only on small scale, what was the cause?

321. Was there a sufficient margin at the end of 1896 between the prices of wheat or maize in India and the prices of these grains in Europe and America to make import into India profitable?

322. If such a margin existed, but grain was not imported, what were the obstacles in the way of the establishment of the trade?

323. In ordinary years what quantity of rice does Burma export to India and other countries? Please give figures showing the distribution.

324. From November 1896 to October 1897 what quantity of Burma rice was imported into this port?

325. Were these imports mainly for despatch to the interior?

326. Were the firms on whose account these Burma imports were made chiefly European or native firms?

327. Were these imports made on the order of up-country grain-dealers for Burma rice, or by Calcutta firms at their

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* NOTE.—These questions are intended for witnesses put forward by the Chambers of Commerce, and for experts specially invited by the Commission to give evidence.

own risk in anticipation of the demand of up-country dealers ?

328. Was any difficulty at first experienced in getting up-country grain-dealers to take Burma rice, and did stocks in consequence tend to accumulate and the price to fall in the port.

329. Was there always a profitable margin between rice prices in Burma and here to admit of continuous import here ?

330. It has been stated that in the event of India requiring large imports of grain from America or Europe, European firms at the ports would find more difficulty in engaging in such import trade than in the case of the grain-export trade ; that is to say, the reversal of the ordinary process of trade would be accompanied by special risks and difficulties. Is this so ?

331. The largest export houses have, it is believed, many up-country agents in the interior who place contracts for purchase of grain for export with native grain-dealers. In the event of India requiring to import grain, could not contracts for sales of grain be placed with up-country dealers by the same agency ?

332. Would the ordinary course of trade be for the European importing house to deal with the native firms in the port, and for those firms to place the grain in the up-country markets ? Would the European houses import at their own risk, or only in fulfilment of contracts with native firms ?

333. Within how many days could 20,000 or 30,000 tons of wheat or maize be landed in India from Europe or America after a contract had been placed in this port ?

334. In that interval prices in India might have so fallen as to prevent the importer from making the profit he had anticipated ?

335. Is this contingency one of the causes which might prevent grain from being imported from distant countries to India, in spite of prices being so high for the time being in India as to hold out expectations of considerable profit ?

336. Might there be a serious panic in the Indian grain markets, resulting in dealers refusing to sell or extremely high prices being asked, without its leading to imports from abroad being arranged for ?

337. Do you think that the offer of a bounty on each ton imported, or the direct purchase by Government of grain for feeding the poor on relief works, would have eased the market ? To what extent would any such measure have discouraged private trade ?

338. What would have been the effect in the grain markets of foreign countries of intelligence that the Indian Government was purchasing, or encouraging the importation of grain ? Was the want of activity in the grain import trade from America or Europe in any way due to the dearness of money in India in the winter of 1896-97, and to difficulty in obtaining accommodation ? If so, could Government with advantage have stimulated import by loans or contracts ?

339. The relief workers were paid a cash wage sufficient to enable them to buy a stated quantity of food, the wage varying week by week with the local grain-prices. If Indian food-prices throughout the famine were lower than the price at which grain could be laid down in India from Europe or America, might not importation by Government of food for some of the relief works have made those particular relief operations costlier than they have actually been ?

340. Would this disadvantage have been compensated by a lowering of prices in India, owing to which other relief works would have been less costly, and the public would have been enabled to buy food at lower rates ?

341. If we may suppose that prices would have fallen in consequence of the Government undertaking to import from abroad to feed the relief workers, would this have caused less rice from Burma to have been imported ?

342. What reductions were made in railway rates on grain from the sea-board to the interior, and had such reductions an effect on trade ?

343. Can you think of any possible combination of circumstances under which it would be advisable for the Indian Government to import foreign grain itself for its relief purposes, or to stimulate such import by the trade by loans, contracts or bounties ?

344. Was there ever a time during the recent famine when Government might, in your opinion, have tried such measures with advantage ?

345. Can you conceive of any case in which prohibition of exports would in your opinion be of advantage ?

C. P. O.—No. 1080 R. & A.—16-12-98.—2,306.—E. Rose.

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APPENDICES, VOL. IV.

EVIDENCE OF WITNESSES

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